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JOHN BUNYAN

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

ST. PAUL'S LIFE OF CHRIST

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
PUBLISHERS LONDON

JOHN BUNYAN

By GWILYM O. GRIFFITH

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
PUBLISHERS LONDON

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PREFACE

THE only excuse for another *Life* of Bunyan after Dr. John Brown's massive and authoritative contribution, is, that in a volume so rich in the fruits of detailed research as Dr. Brown's, the human story must almost inevitably be somewhat obscured.

Possibly, too, since the writing of Dr. Brown's book, there have been developments in our national and ecclesiastical life which lend new significance to certain neglected aspects of Bunyan's message.

In one instance, and in one only, has there been any appreciable departure from the findings of Bunyan's standard biographer, and that instance relates to the origin and date of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Grateful acknowledgments are due to Rev. W. T. Whitley, M.A., LL.D., F.R.Hist.S., for certain revisions in the text of the present edition.

G. O. G.

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Chapter I — *The Man*

The life of John Bunyan covers the period from the Petition of Right to the eve of the Revolution of 1688. Shakespeare had been dead but twelve years when Bunyan was born. The Elizabethan era, the discovery of new worlds and a new way of life, belonged to the yesterday of Bunyan's England. In his day the history of Europe was largely the history of the conflict of faiths. On the Continent the issue lay between Romanist and Protestant, in England between Prelatist and Puritan. During the first twelve years of Bunyan's life England was governed without a Parliament. Instead, there were Wentworth and Laud, the Star Chamber and the High Commission. Laud's besom was sweeping Puritanism into the sea. The sea was casting it up—intact—on the shores of New England.

Throughout this period we have theology and politics inextricably intermixed—Arminianism and Monarchy, Calvinism and constitutional government, Taxation by Parliament and Justification by Faith. The broken shells of these debates History may finger for us; it cannot

recapture what they once contained. The passions and prejudices, the sense of supreme hazards and jeopardies—all these are escaped.

In the year of Bunyan's birth, with Parliament not yet dissolved, young Oliver Cromwell rides up to Town to take his seat as Member for Huntingdon. In the House he sees and hears Sir Robert Phillips of Somerset "mingling his words with weeping," Mr. Pym doing the like, the Speaker similarly affected, and Sir Edward Coke so overcome "by the abundance of tears" (his own) that he must give up and sit down. This was a strange and ominous sight in England, those tears not being of the nature of a mild and genial thaw, but rather the upboiling of hot springs.

Such an age must for ever elude us. Petitions and Remonstrances, Parliamentary wars, the Commonwealth, the Restoration, the Plague and Fire, Dutch wars, the Dover treaty, plots and rumours of plots, the Monmouth rising, the Bloody Assize, the Trial of the Seven—our very knowledge of these defeats us. We know them as finished facts, as we may know the meteorological records of the weather of fifty years ago. We cannot know them as they did who found themselves buffeted under darkened heavens amid the crash and fury of a hurricane of events.

(1)

Bunyan, then, was a child of the storm. In that tremendous time he lived his life, in its thunder and tempest he attained to himself.

Yet, perhaps, what we at first observe is his comparative detachment. To use a figure which he liked to employ, he played his part on a crowded stage. But taking him, for our purpose, as the central figure, and observing the curious and medleyed *ensemble*, perhaps the notable fact is that so few of the Puritan leaders stand in any personal relation to him.

It appears, that is to say, that Bunyan was a genius whose contacts, in his own lifetime (and for long afterwards) did not reach beyond the circle of mediocrity. In the maturity of his powers he travelled far and wide through the English counties. His books travelled farther and wider. In London his commanding figure and massive head must have become as familiar to the rank-and-file of Dissent as the fragile form of Baxter or the stately presence of Howe. But save for John Owen, no great leader of the faith seems to have sought his acquaintance. Owen, it is said, went to hear him preach. He discussed him with Charles II. He once engaged to preface a Bunyan treatise with an epistle of commendation, but certain disputatious brethren stayed his hand. ("And perhaps," says Bunyan, "it was more for the glory of God that truth should go naked into the world than as seconded by so mighty an armour-bearer as he.") But Owen was the exception.

Thus for the general *ensemble* on the Bunyan stage we have the nondescript companions of his childhood and youth, rustic neighbours, bell-

ringers, ale-house Neds and Harrys. We have his nameless comrades of the Parliamentary wars—Hudibras' self, it may be, in the rear, and the shadow of Cromwell. We have good Parson Hall of Elstow, and, well to the fore, the great-hearted Major Gifford, with the Whitemans and Fenns and Bardolfs of the Bedford Meeting. Appears also, tableau-wise, the sober and immaculate Dr. John Owen, his friendly hand "stopped" by the cantankerous Danverses and Dennes of the Baptism controversy; and behind them, shrewd, wealthy and uncompromising Brother Kiffin of Devonshire Square. For the rest, quite obscured in the remote shadows and in the wings, range the Baxters and Howes and Bateses and Goodwins, the Foxes and Penns, the Tillotsons and Stillingfleets; with the Miltons and Drydens, the Evelyns and Pepyses only to be guessed at.

And so with the scenic setting. The scenes are varied enough, but in relation to the tremendous events of the era there is a certain slightness of contact. We must have the green fields and thatched cottages of Elstow, the village green, the Moot Hall, the church and the belfry tower. We must have some glimpse of the King's highway—the road running through Elstow to the great city—the bypaths turning off into the meadows, the watery gleam of the sloughs and marshes in the distance. We shall risk a picture of the breached and battered walls of Leicester in the tumult of Rupert's assault. We must have the Bedford county gaol, and the lock-up on the

bridge, and a sight of the cobbled streets of Bedford town. Perhaps the fancy runs to some woodland clearing at midnight with devout forms in dim outline filling the dell, sentinels silhouetted on the moonlit slopes, and a certain familiar and burly figure standing with open book, the muffled lantern-flame lighting up his face. But the fact remains that in that age of blood and fire, of wars, holocausts, plots, plagues and terrors, comparatively little of external history thrusts into Bunyan's life. He was a child of the storm, but for him the " cataracts and hurricanoes, sulphurous and thought-executing fires " and " oak-cleaving thunderbolts " were mainly in the region of the soul.

Still, it is easily possible to over-emphasize this detachment and make too much of the legend of the " immortal dreamer " who lived in his dreams.

(2)

The fact is that Bunyan was not more truly a dreamer and poet than a solid Englishman with eyes in his head for practical affairs.

It is true that his supreme title to fame lies in that child of his genius which he begat in his bonds—*The Pilgrim's Progress.* It is true also that in some measure the man has been lost in the book. The one picture of him which still adorns the popular imagination shows him as a solitary prisoner shackled in his dungeon-cell, writing (on multitudinous scattered folios) of the progress of his Pilgrim. It is a fanciful picture,

for, as we know, Bunyan was not immured in quite that fashion. And in any case it is too partial and sedentary to convey a fair idea of the stalwart Englishman who came to be recognized as one of the " bishops " of seventeenth-century Dissent, the most popular preacher of his age, the most popular religious teacher of any age since the Apostles.

It may be said that " immortal dreamer " is a title which, by itself, hardly introduces the man who, with every element of fanaticism in his nature, yet opposed to the disruptive zealotries of his times and of his class a staunch and militant common sense. It is true that, for a while after his conversion, he lived not so much in England as in the world invisible : and it may be supposed that when, at that time, his imagination focussed upon earthly happenings at all, it was turned upon a corner of the earth remote enough from England and upon events far distant from the Puritan times. With " the eyes of his soul," as he would say, it was the hills of Galilee that he viewed, and sail-flecked Gennesaret, and the white domes and turrets of old Jerusalem. Through the haze of sixteen centuries he could see all this more clearly than the little world that wagged around Elstow and Bedford, more clearly than the stormy scenes at Westminster, the tumults in Cromwellian England. It made him marvel, he tells us, to follow the earthly life and sufferings of Christ, but " these things I did see so evidently, even as if I had stood by when he was in the world, and

also when he was caught up." He beheld the purchase-price of man's redemption paid on Mount Calvary " as clearly and as really with the eyes of my soul as ever, methought, I had seen a penny loaf bought with a penny."

But he who would perfect a Christian conscience must take account of both worlds ; and Heaven has its own way of educating men. Bunyan, it seems, learned much in this matter when the England of his day shut him up for twelve years in Bedford gaol : but before this, no less than afterward, in his preaching itineraries through the country he must have felt something of the challenge of external events. In his rural rides he may have been nothing of a Cobbett, but he kept his eyes open ; and when the heats and fevers of the earlier years were over, and he was able to make calm survey of the England of his day, he took his measure of it and delivered himself with candour and pungency. He was no leveller nor turbulent zealot ; he was in no sense a typical Roundhead ; in some respects he was curiously Tory in his bias, a King's man and upholder of the ancient order : but hardly Cobbett himself could have declaimed more vehemently against social injustice.

It is true that Bunyan's first concern was for man as a pilgrim of eternity rather than as an economic unit. To him what mattered most was man's dignity and immortal glory as an heir of redemption, and what mattered most of all was the glory of God. But out of all this he did produce

and develop a reforming interest in practical affairs. It may be said that, for all his sharp experience of poverty, he never belonged to the class of the very poor. He always had the independence of a man with a trade in his fingers, and from middle-life onward, though "his treasure swelled not to excess" he always had enough to live "decently and creditably." Still, he had seen, as the saying goes, the black hob, and he knew the abuses under which the poor suffered. These, says Mr. R. H. Tawney, he denounced in the manner of a mediaeval friar. That is to say, he denounced them without any apprehension of the new and vast economic changes which were silently refashioning society. In such matters his was the outlook of the average artisan who observed the petty dealings of local hucksters and chapmen, the avarice of local usurers, the tyranny of churlish masters toward their drudges.

But naïve and self-educated as he was, he had a vision of a better England, a new Christendom: and if he did not, by intellectual miracle, divine the significance of the new Mammon of European Finance, he did discern something no less significant and fundamental. He saw that a permanently better order could be built up only on a better conscience, and that in the last resort a better conscience must come through the witness and authority of a quickened and united Church. For it is clear that Bunyan believed in a Church-civilization as thoroughly as any mediaevalist; only he looked for its source and centre not to an

ecclesiastical empire ruling by temporal power but to a spiritual fellowship working through moral influence.

No doubt, even to mention Bunyan's social and ecclesiastical opinions may appear beside the mark. In these matters we have not usually been disposed to take him seriously. Yet in this respect Restoration England took him seriously enough, finding some excuse for regarding him, not, indeed, as an "immortal dreamer," but as a person of disquieting possibilities. It might jest at his faith, but it held him for some twelve years behind prison bars. And admittedly, had his opinions taken on a different colour, it would have been a matter of some wisdom to restrain so powerful a demagogue, with one tongue in his head and another in his pen.

Incidentally, Froude seems to suggest that if Bunyan's political influence and opinions were harmless, it was mainly because he was a Baptist. Had he been an Independent, Froude thinks it might have been otherwise. "The Baptists and Quakers might have been trusted to discourage violence," but "the Independents were not meek like the Baptists" (*Life of Bunyan*, chap. v). The explanation hardly fits the facts. Not all English Baptists of the seventeenth century were of pacifist principles; if Clarendon is to be believed, some of them, outraged by the despotism of the final phase of the Protectorate, gave themselves to a by no means pacifist intrigue for the overthrow of the Government; and in any case Bunyan's religious communion lay outside the

strictly Baptist societies. If he held aloof from plotting and stuck to his preaching, it was not so much because of denominational restraints of any sort, but because he had an honest persuasion that hope for the betterment of England lay no longer in the furbishing of pikes and the priming of matchlocks, but in something far different.

We may say that Bunyan was a disillusioned ex-Service man. He had fought in the Civil Wars and had lived to see the millennial hopes they were to realize harden into actualities unideal and vulgar enough. Force, it seemed, was no remedy for these English troubles. Bunyan turns to his New Testament and learns that better times can come only by way of repentance and better men, and that the calling of men to repentance and betterment is the work not of armies but of the Church of the living God. Thus it grows upon him that the warring of the sects must pass and the people of God come together and bend themselves to their common task. This is what he sees. And in time he develops out of his New Testament study a qualified but practical pacifism of his own.

(3)

If we look closer we shall find him human enough. It is clear he was always something of a character, and together with the solid Saxon in him there were other and baffling elements. Some have guessed at a Gipsy strain, "Bunyan" being among the adopted patronymics of the

Romany folk, who also followed the tinkering. It would be easy to argue for another and very different descent. Practically from the time of the Conquest the Bunyans, Bunions or *Buignons* had been small landholders in the Elstow neighbourhood, and the Bunyan cottage, humble as it was, was nevertheless a sort of ancestral home.

At all events there was a volatile admixture in his constitution. Perhaps some suggestion of it may be traced, as "Mark Rutherford" has pointed out, in the one more or less authentic portrait of him that has come down to us—Robert White's pencil study, drawn presumably from life. Those who have sought to read the inscrutable countenance of Dante have found it something more than the face of a poet—have found it, for example, the face of one with an aptitude for command, an aristocrat, a military leader. Dante and Bunyan are not names that come easily together, but it is curious that there is a similarity here. Bunyan's face, says "Mark Rutherford," is that of a poet, but also it is in the proper sense of the word, an aristocrat's, and it might be that of a great admiral or general. There are the eyes of a poet and lover. There is English solidity. There is also the suggestion of a humour and vivacity which hint at another strain. It is a face that might have kindled (as it did) to the vision of the bridal City of God, and might also have kindled to the news, for instance, that Blake was sweeping the seas of the Barbary pirates.

Even when Bunyan roundly asserts the excessive

meanness of his father's house and rank, he makes us feel that it is the exaggerative reaction of a naturally proud spirit. In point of fact, a village brazier who owned the cottage he lived in, carried on a settled local trade, and was able, as Bunyan's father was able, to put his son to school, was not to be classed with vagabond menders of pots and pans. Withal, Bunyan can sharply retort upon those who belittle him. A pamphleteer nettles him by remarking that he would not have written had he "found any of parts that would divert themselves to take notice of you." "What kind of a YOU am I?" retorts Bunyan. "And why is MY rank so mean that the most gracious and godly among you may not duly and soberly consider of what I have said?"

Perhaps, too, there is a certain very human touchiness in the way that he so often protests his lack of learning—and occasionally takes a fling at the learned. He has never "gone to school to Aristotle or Plato," never been schooled at all except "according to the rate of other poor men's children," knows "neither the mode nor the figure of a syllogism," nor scarce "which is major or minor," and is, in short, a "dull-headed man." This is very humble, but it is not all humility. He has not, he somewhere admits to "the learned reader," beautified his subject-matter with fine language, nor "given, either in the line or in the margent, a cloud of sentences from the learned fathers"; and the reason is that he has not read them and does not possess "acuteness of

language." But even so, he is for "drinking water out of" his "own cistern." "I prefer the Bible, and having that still with me, I count myself far better furnished than if I had without it all the libraries of the two universities." Wherefore, as for his learned critics and their friends, "I will not take of them 'from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, lest they should say, We have made Abram rich.'" (See "Epistle to Four Sorts of Readers": *Holy City*, Offor's Edn., Vol. III, p. 398.)

It may be said that Bunyan himself, in his spiritual memoirs, has increased the difficulty of achieving a balanced conception of his character. For *Grace Abounding* is in one sense a misleading book. It is misleading because the candour of its confessions is so compelling that we are apt to conclude there is little to be added. In point of fact, this stark nudity of self-revelation is off-set by an extreme reticence and by the fact that the Bunyan of *Grace Abounding* is the Bunyan of a passing and abnormal phase. We have an engaging pen-portrait of him by an anonymous modern writer: "A fine, stalwart figure . . . fleshier than is common to one with so active a mind. Tall, big-boned, ruddy complexion, large bright poetic eyes, full-lipped mouth and square jaw, a straight bold nose and flowing reddish hair . . . power with natural grace. If he frowned, it was with no trace of vulgarity or temper; when he smiled, it was the beaming of his sunny soul, irrepressible and hearty. There is a wealth of

bonhomie in such a physiognomy that is itself a magnetic force." We should need to look far for a better picture; but what it presents to us is not the nerve-racked sufferer of *Grace Abounding*, nor the hot gospeller of the early itineraries, but a mellower Bunyan whose nature had "expanded into fireside humanity."

It may be admitted, too, that *Grace Abounding* does not exhibit the normal processes of New Testament religion. Much of it is the transcript of mental workings which came near to madness. Bunyan nowhere shows his fundamental sanity more convincingly than when he reviews some of his fiercest temptations and finds them to have been sick-fancies. He has the mental detachment to apply to them the word "ridiculous"—"these things may seem ridiculous to others, even as ridiculous as they were in themselves"; only he will have us remember that to him they seemed quite other than ridiculous at the time.

Infinitely pitiable, no doubt, is this aspect of the memoirs; infinitely pitiable that in an age when issues so mighty and engaging were in debate and the destinies of England still trembled in the balance, this man of genius and conscience should spend his days and nights, long months and years, in what may seem a purely individual and all but demented concern for the safety of his own soul.

Yet we must fail in our reading of that epic conflict if we interpret it simply as a struggle for individual security. That motive was active, but

there was also a motive far deeper, pushing up slowly into consciousness and at last coming into tremendous expression. We presently find that this man of unschooled genius, caught in the maze and riot of an age of strange frenzies and bigotries, must fight forward, not alone for his own sake, but because to do otherwise would be a betrayal of loyalties reaching far out beyond all self-ward solicitude. He becomes aware at last that he is standing, against the contention of outward adversaries and the qualms and dreads of his own mind, for a fundamental allegiance to truth and honesty, for the supreme engagements of the soul. When this is made plain to him all other considerations fall away. He may suffer for his pains; may lose friends, kindred, the consolations of affection; may be pilloried, imprisoned, whipped, hanged; and being hanged, he may be damned eternally. This he must face; but even so he is for going on. Come afflictions, persecutions, death; come damnation, eternal night and eternal flame,—he can do no other; his allegiance holds. "I will leap off the ladder even blindfold into eternity, sink or swim, come heaven, come hell." This is the true Bunyan; all other experiences, lifts and falls, fleeting illuminations and recurrent glooms, being Bunyan in process of self-attainment.

For the rest, if any biographer were one day to essay a biography which should reverse the prescribed method, and work backward from tomb to cradle, he might find in Bunyan's career a fit

subject for experiment. For so to study his life would be to come in advance upon the justifying clue which threads those early labyrinthine miseries. As we know, the supreme justification for the long years of soul-agony is *The Pilgrim's Progress* itself. The Dream was written in part in Bedford gaol, but the imprisonment to which we must ultimately trace it was neither on Bedford bridge nor in Silver Street; it was the stern and dark duress of those earlier years when he "sat in darkness and in the shadow of death."

In the Dream itself we shall find him human enough—not less so than in his early, unregenerate love of tip-cat and bell-ringing and dancing on the green; human enough, too, in the droll by-play with which he scores off the heavy Puritans who question the sobriety of his glorious book; and human, also, in his honest, open delight in its amazing popularity and in his artless confession that he wrote it for sheer diversion, to keep him "from worser thoughts which make me do amiss":

> "Nor did I undertake
> Thereby to please my neighbour; no, not I;
> I did it mine own self to gratify."

This is altogether honest and lovable.

(4)

No doubt he was human, too, in his inconsistencies. The Evangelical believer who was all for the larger fellowship could find no room in his scheme for the Quakers and their like. The man

who owed his soul to the testimony and counsel of a little group of godly women must condemn women's meetings as unscriptural and dangerous. The Puritan who practised so austere and monkish a reserve that at one time he would seldom consent to shake hands with a woman was induced to share his saddle with Agnes Beaumont on the way to the Gamlingay preaching.

We are to understand that with him goodness was always apt to be an affair of swords; never merely a difficult pilgrimage, but also a series of mortal engagements in which the soul was at cut-and-thrust with monstrous foes. When Christiana was come in her pilgrimage to the Valley of Humiliation she saw her husband's blood on the stones, and some of the shivers of Apollyon's broken darts. When we follow her to that other and more dreadful Valley, shadowed by grim terrors and mortal temptations, we read in the margin, *Christiana now knows what her husband suffered.*

All this is to say that Bunyan was born with a tremendous and perilous temperament. He had an imagination that marched with drums and trumpets and a pageant of banners. He was by nature passionate, excitable, intractable and avid of all enjoyment. When such a nature puts on patience, self-discipline, meekness, gentleness, it must wear them as spoils taken in battle, trophies of the warfare of grace. The well-known passage in which he proclaims his chastity proclaims no less clearly his natural passion and vehemency. It is

as if between the lines we can see where the earth about his feet has been trampled, and strewn with those shivers of broken darts. He has the soul of a lover, a poet's intensity of feeling. He accuses himself of being "somewhat too too fond" of his family, and confesses to have "found himself a man," compassed with infirmities; "the parting with my wife and poor children hath oft been to me as the pulling the flesh from my bones." All his virtues are cuirassed and helmeted and live, as we have said, by the sword.

As for his genius, it matured slowly. He was fifty before the first part of his *Pilgrim's Progress* was brought out, fifty-six before it was completed. It may be said that he educated himself by writing books, and many had to be written before *The Pilgrim's Progress* could be achieved. Underlying the book are the long controversies with the strict sectarians and separatists. In a sense, the Allegory is Bunyan's reply to those who would interpret salvation in sectarian terms. To what sect did Christian and his fellow-pilgrims belong? It is Bunyan's achievement that the question never arises. He has his way with us, and while we are with him on the pilgrim road we forget our divisions. To that extent he humanized the faith; and the separatist, the exclusive priest, and those who would claim a proprietary patent for the Christian ordinances will not find *The Pilgrim's Progress* their convenient textbook.

Thus, fundamentally Puritan as he was, he was ill at ease with the Dissent of his day. Living,

in Milton's phrase, in "an era of sects and schisms," he found sectarianism against the grain of his nature. He learned to abhor the loose tonguesters who wandered through the country with their wild fantasies—in his own words, "the carnal gospellers that everywhere, like locusts and maggots, crawl up and down the nations." Perhaps he was none the less vehement because in externals he could be ranked as one of them, and was so accounted by the prejudiced and the undiscerning.

But, as we have already seen, he also dissociated himself from the separatism of the graver and more responsible communions. "I have observed," he writes (in his *Heavenly Footman*), "that there is a great running to and fro, some this way and some that way, yet it is to be feared most of them are out of the way. . . . Here is one runs a-quaking, another a-ranting; one again runs after the Baptism and another after the Independency. Here is one for free-will and another for Presbytery; possibly most of all these sects run quite the wrong way." The command, he bluntly reminds some of his over-zealous Baptist brethren, is not "Above all things put on water" but "Above all things put on charity." "A man who believeth in Jesus and fulfilleth the royal law doth more glorify God and honour religion in the world than he that keepeth, if there were so many, ten thousand figurative laws." And again: "Men are wedded to their opinions beyond what the law of grace

and love will admit. Here is a Presbyterian, here is an Independent, and a Baptist, so joined each man to his own opinions that they cannot have that communion with one another as by the testament of the Lord Jesus they are commanded. . . . What is the cause ? Is it the truth ? No ! . . . It is because every man abounds too much in his own sense and takes not care to separate his opinion from the iniquity that cleaveth thereto." The man who could so write must have had his spiritual home otherwhere than in the region and climate of seventeenth-century Dissent.

So it is of religion not so much as a system but as a romance that he is the poet and apostle, and from his conversion onward it is Bunyan the Evangelical humanist that we see in process of attainment. A strange process in very truth—all the natural humanity of him nigh to being whelmed in the black flood of those critical years of darkness and terror ; baffled and tortured, too, in the later years of crude theologizing and controversy. And yet this was the process by which a wiser Wisdom than ours tempered his spirit and brought forth in him at last the desired result.

(5)

Withal he takes his place among the Saints.

The chief impression is that of great-hearted manliness. It is hardly the impression of saintliness in the mediaeval sense. To the last Bunyan remains too burly and sonorous for the canonized type, and it took long years for the tempering of

the early crudities. But for all that, we cannot miss the strange shining that radiates from him.

Extraordinary it would have been, indeed, if the man who composed the religious classic which for inspiration has taken its assured place next to the Bible itself had been anything other than a devout and experienced soul; but beyond this there is about Bunyan a vital spirituality and triumphancy which are inescapable. There is ardent and radiant in him what may best be described in the simplest form of speech—a deep personal love for Jesus Christ. For the note which Bunyan strikes is the troubadour note.

Two men could hardly have been less alike than the Saint of Assisi and the Bedford Puritan, yet they had this in common, that they were troubadours of Christ, lovers who brought to Him a lover's ardour. Somehow Bunyan's Song of the Cross brings to mind the scene at San Damiano. When Christian came up with the Cross his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and he began to be glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, "He hath given me rest by His sorrow and life by His death." Thus he stood awhile to look and wonder, even till the springs that were in his head sent the water down his cheeks. Then presently he gave three leaps for joy and went on his way singing. We know the burden of the song:

> "Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be
> The Man that there was put to shame for me."

There is a Franciscan touch, too, about

Bunyan's protest against the pride of natural gifts. Gifts, he says, however great, are at best but the instruments upon which love makes music. "*Is it so much to be a fiddle?*" St. Francis would have liked that saying well.

And since the strange comparison has been broached, there is another irresistible allusion. Upon a time when Bunyan is walking in the fields around Elstow, suddenly the love of Christ comes mightily upon him. Says he: "I could have spoken of His love and of His mercy even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands before me, had they been capable to have understood me." One thinks of that earlier scene, somewhere between Cannara and Bevagna, where for the love of Christ St. Francis preached to the birds in the shadow of the roadside trees. It may be that those very crows, sable and raucous, settled upon the brown ridges of English earth, set up the appropriate Puritan contrast against that other highly coloured picture of the multitudinous gay-plumaged southern birds, gathered about their saint, "beating with their wings and bowing their heads." Moreover we have in Bunyan's case the contrastive and significant qualifying clause—"had they been capable to have understood me." Yet it is the comparison, not the contrast, that holds us.

(6)

It remains true that all comparisons and classifications fall away. Bunyan is himself and

no other. When he says of his immortal book that it bears a stamp not easily counterfeited he does but assert his own inimitable individuality : for his book is himself. He is as individual as Shakespeare, as Dr. Johnson ; like them he is one of our English institutions ; like Shakespeare he is more—he belongs to humanity. He is always the naïve, ill-educated child of genius, the light within struggling through the horn-lantern of accepted conventions. He is always half-mystic, half-literalist, subconsciously labouring to humanize a crude theology. But he is always something more—always a Puritan and something more. There is the unanalysable remainder which removes genius beyond the calculation of its contemporaries, beyond all calculation. We are told that his last days were largely given to the reconciling of divided families. In fact his peace-making went much further ; it went far toward the reconciliation of Puritanism and Romance.

It is clear that he was not understood. With all his popularity he might have said, like Pascal, "*Je suis seul.*" The great leaders of his age and faith overlooked him, the lesser ones, expert in the sophisticated opinion of their class, were apt to regard him as an upstart gospeller, a troubler of Israel, an advocate of linsey-woolsey notions. For twelve years—a fifth of his lifetime—the upholders of the established order held him under lock and key. Secular society, incontinently aping Continental culture, had no thought for

him at all, except to jest at him. It is said that Charles II stumbled upon the most sulphurous of all Bunyan's works—his *Sighs from Hell, or Groans of a Damned Soul*—and that Majesty's facetious wit was pleased to have the treatise bound between the covers of a salacious French romance and set on the royal shelves. It was left for the plain people to recognize him for what he was, the romanticist of faith, and to preserve his fame through successive generations of neglect.

On May 23, 1627, Thomas Bonnionn, widower, of Elstow, took to wife Margaret Bentley, spinster, of the same parish. Under the date November 30, 1628, the parish register records the baptism of John, the Sonne of Thomas Bonnionn. Our first glimpse of son John shows him as a voluble, red-headed boy, sporting noisily with his small companions, and going home at bedtime to dream that devils were come to fetch him away.

It is not easy for us to leap the centuries and place ourselves alongside this boy. Within, however, the recollection of our fathers or grandfathers—so recently, that is, as 1859—there died in Elstow an aged worthy, John Rogers by name, whose memory was something of a candle to light up the dimness of that distant past. For it would appear that John Rogers' grandfather could tell of the days when his own father played with this shock-headed little son of brazier Thomas Bonnionn, or Bunyan, who lived in Elstow parish, hard by Harrowden, on the coach road to London. John Rogers, through his

grandsire touching Bunyan's time and through his grandchildren touching our time, does in some sort encourage our imagination.

Then, it seems, was a merrie England—morris dancing and the Maypole, cakes and ale, and a health to King Charles. Many a "vanity fair" with its "jugglings, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes," its tumblers and merry andrews, lumbered through Elstow along the great North Road. Good Parson Dent, in his *Plaine Man's Pathway to Heaven* (a book to fall in due time into young John's hands), fears that this mirth and gaudery were gone to an excess. The Scriptures, he complains, are esteemed no more than old shoes, and preachers as shoemakers. It is a day for "doubled and re-doubled ruffes, strouting fardinggales, long locks, fore-tufts, shag hair"; women coming into "the streetes with their Pedlers shop upon their backe," and carrying "their crests verie high, taking themselves to be little Angels." Moreover, "plaine folke in the countrey" must flaunt it likewise; "euery Iacke will be a gentleman, and Ioane is as good as my Lady." Indeed, so "out of joynt" are these times, we cannot, it seems, "by their apparell, discerne the Maid from the Mistresse." "Now adaies few will keepe within compasse, few will know their places; but the most part leape quite out of their sockets." And as for holy duties, religion is not worth a gally halfpenny. "Many upon the Sabbaths sleepe upon their beds, all the Sermon-while, in the afternoone," and others

must be at stool-ball, cock-fighting and bear-baiting.

If these things, with the help of Wentworth and the blessing of Laud, could have made England permanently merry, then history must have taken a different turn. But it was the unhappiness of the ruling powers to overtax both the wealth and the conscience of the country. Moreover, Laud's besom had not completed its work. There were Puritans still *un*swept into the sea—Mr. Hampden, Mr. Pym, Mr. Cromwell and the like; pockets and corners, also, where precisionists and men of a serious turn developed their misgivings without undue fear of the Plantations or the American wilderness.

We may take it that Bedford was such a pocket. If later, in the Cromwellian days, Elstow parish church was allowed to retain much of its forms and liturgies undisturbed, it was, perhaps, because its previous discipline had been passably precise. If we take a hint from Bunyan's description of Badman's upbringing, and another from the wording of the senior Bunyan's last will and testament, we may infer that the Bunyan home itself was strict and evangelical in its way or looked in that direction. To this we shall return.

For the rest, we may remind ourselves that in some not unimportant respects village life in seventeenth-century England was not greatly dissimilar to village life in the England of our grandfathers. News travelled slowly over the rutted roads, and news-letters, when they came

into vogue, were the luxury of the educated few. Each community, with its gentry and yeomen, its craftsmen and drudges, its tinkers and drovers, was very much of a little world in itself. The parish church, the ale-house, the village green were the great institutions. There was drinking a-plenty and dicing and dancing, manly sports and cock-fighting and bear-baiting. Men's heads were full of folk-lore, more desperately so in the earlier days, when witches and hobgoblins abounded. Withal, the respectable and sober-minded contrived to live in an industrious and not too imaginative English way, winning a frugal competence. Carlyle has somewhere described the Ecclefechan of his father's day—the "scraffling" for clothes, the knitting and thatching for hire, the hunting of hares through dales and cleughs for food—father Carlyle's gunflint tied on with a hatband. Bunyan and Carlyle might have matched their boyhood experiences without being reminded too often of the lapse of the centuries.

As for the weightier matters, Grievances and Supplies, Ship-money, No Parliament, no Subsidies—our little red-headed Bunyan cared for none of these things. Yet, presently, even a madcap village lad was to realize that he was living in a strange and stirring England. Laud, with his Puritan-sweeping besom, finds his way to the Tower. Wentworth, "as cheerfully putting off his doublet as ever he did when he went to bed," finds his way to Tower Hill; and lays his head, with the Scheme

of Thorough still inside it, on the block. The bells and bonfires tell the story through England, —perhaps, among the rest, the steeple bells of Elstow, to whose tongues Bunyan was always ready to listen.

Through Elstow, a year or so later, ride grim-faced yeomen, with Parliamentary badges conspicuous in their hats, spurring post-haste to Westminster, where the train-bands already guard the House against royal intrusion—the King, it seems, having developed a vehement desire to pull certain "rascals out by the ears." In this matter, if we read aright, Majesty, without being aware of it, had an advocate in the Elstow alehouses and elsewhere, in the person of Thomas Bunyan. The Bunyans were King's men.

(1)

So far as direct testimony goes, Bunyan's parents, Thomas and Margaret, remain shadowy figures enough. Thanks to the patience and zeal of the best of all Bunyan's biographers, we obtain a glimpse of Thomas some three years before son John was born. We see him through an entry in the diary of the Reverend Thomas Archer, rector of Houghton Conquest, next parish to Elstow. "Memorandum.—That in Anno 1625 one Bonion of Elsto clyminge of Rookes neasts in the Bery wood ffound 3 Rookes in a nest, all white as milke and not a blacke fether on them" (*Life of Bunyan*, Dr. John Brown, chap. ii). Thomas was then two-and-twenty and had

already been married some two years—to Anne Pinney. Anne died in 1627, and, as we note, Thomas married again the same year. He survived his second wife and punctually married a third time within a month or two.

Making due allowance for his times, we must dislike him for this scampish matrimonial alacrity. He was probably volatile and wayward and something of an oddity, but he was not without family-pride. If latterly the family fortunes had failed, he did not forget that the Bunyans had a name to live up to. Great-grandfather Rogers recollects that the Harrowden corner of Elstow, by the Sharpfields, where stood the Bunyan ancestral cottages, was known as Bonyon's End, a name harking back to days when the family were landholders in a larger way. We see this family-pride in Thomas's father, who must make an elaborate will, leaving to grandson John, "toe be paied him when he shall have accomplished his age of one and twenty yeares," the sum of Sixpence. Thomas, also, in his turn, must maintain the testamentary tradition. "Imprimis I give unto my Sonne John Bunyan, one shilling"—to sonne Thomas and daughter Mary a like sum, all of them to bee paid within a yeare after his death. This certainly is in the grand manner.

In the same spirit, perhaps, Thomas, having a son born to him during the Civil War, has him christened *Charles*. We may suppose that this was Thomas's way of running up the King's flag over the Bunyan cottage. In 1645, and in a

county entirely on the Parliamentary side, "Charles" was a significant name to pitch upon, but the Bunyans, it seems, were an independent sort with a tradition to maintain, and something of all this was in John's blood also.

Perhaps this pride of family tradition made Thomas, with all his vagaries, a strict Churchman in his way. Grandfather Bunyan in his time had shown his mettle in parish affairs, taking a stand against certain high-handed carryings-on in Elstow Church and finally appearing before the Commissary for telling the churchwardens that they were "forsworne men." Certainly Thomas saw to it that son John should have an education.

> "I'm no poet, nor a poet's son,
> But a mechanic guided by no rule
> But what I gained in a grammar school
> In my minority."

So Bunyan is made to sing in the introduction to the *Scriptural Poems*. Dr. John Brown, upon grounds which are more or less conclusive, rejects the Bunyan authorship of the *Poems*, and to that extent Bedford Grammar School, in this connection, fades into uncertainty; but the plain prose of *Grace Abounding* assures us that he was sent to school.

To hark back to the episode of the milk-white rooks: Dr. John Brown sees vividly the whole scene: "the father of the Dreamer, wandering in vacant mood in the Ellensbury Wood, looks

and wonders at the three milk-white birds in the black rook's nest." It may be so. But one seems to see even more clearly the versatile brazier, arrived with his trundle-forge at Houghton Conquest Rectory, and engaged (what time he fettles up the rectory pots and pans) in discursive dialogue with mild and quaint old Parson Archer. The parson, it seems, with his Notebook for a hobby, is always ready to pick up unconsidered trifles of local interest; and thus do those three milk-white rooks serve the turn, fluttering, as it were, over the edge of the loquacious Thomas's memory or pleasant fancy; and Parson Archer, well pleased, returns to his library to write his curious memorandum.

(2)

This, together with the familiar and sombre picture in *Grace Abounding*, is all we can gather of direct evidence concerning Bunyan's parentage and childhood: save that there was at least good education on his mother's side, the signature of Grandfather Bentley having come down to us as "written in a superior manner." (See Preface to 3rd Edn. Brown's *Life of Bunyan*.) But fortunately we have also another line of reference. For among the sixty treatises and broadsheets which Bunyan lived to write there has come down to us *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*. *Badman* was written after the first part of *Pilgrim's Progress*. We may say that *Badman* is Bunyan's "Rake's Progress." And just as in the Dream,

within certain observable limits, we may identify Christian with Bunyan from his conversion onward, so with his *Badman*, and within limits more or less observable, we may identify the character which gives title to the book with Bunyan in his childhood and youth.

Young Badman's father, it appears, was an honest man and something of a Churchman, and the lad's mother was of the same mind. They were careful for their son's upbringing and would have kept him pretty close, not liking him to "go much abroad among other children that were vile." But from the first he was one to break bounds. It was to his mind to get among playmates as wild as himself, and then he would quickly show himself the ringleader of them all. What were their games and escapades we are not informed. Likely, they fought with imaginary giants, escaped out of imaginary dungeons, and, in ways other than imaginary, trespassed on forbidden grounds, wandered over meadow bypaths, and came to mud and grief in the sloughs and stews of the countryside.

The older boy Badman grew, the less was he disposed to follow his parents' strict rules for him, and especially he could not abide Sundays. For in the eyes of Badman's parents Sunday was not a day merely for gaming and morris dancing and the like, but for Church and sermons. To their scamp of a son, therefore, the beginning of this day was always as if he were going to prison; so that often he would plot to give them the slip

and lurk in by-holes with his rough companions till sermon-time was over.

Beyond this, he was apt, while but a little fellow, to lay hands on and carry off his playmates' things, and trifles that took his eye in neighbours' houses. And as for lying, he would invent, tell, and stand to such tales as might have put older heads to confusion, putting on withal such an audacious face that his poor parents scarce knew how to doubt nor yet how to believe him. And, try as they would, they could not break him of this, though (says Bunyan through his mouthpiece, Wiseman) he wanted not to be told "in my hearing, and that over and over and over," that all liars should have their part at last in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

And then there was young Badman's bad language. Questionless, says good Parson Dent of Shoebury in his *Plain Man's Pathway*, the vice of swearing "is of all other sinnes most rife in this Land. For you shall heare little boyes and children in the streetes, rap out oathes, in most fearfull manner. It would make a man's heart quake to hear them." So, it seems, it made men's hearts quake to hear young Badman.

In all this, we say, Bunyan is no more than holding the mirror to his own childhood, when, as he explicitly tells us in his *Grace Abounding*, notwithstanding that it pleased God to put it into his parents' hearts to give him an education, he followed wild ways and wild companions from

the first, could not endure religion, and "had but few equals, especially considering my years, which were tender, both for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God."

No doubt, boy Bunyan was not taken in the right way. We may infer that he rebelled against too harsh and unimaginative an upbringing,—in one respect too *imaginative*, also, for a child of his mentality, highly sensitive, with a raw nerve for the horrific. Coming home belated, frayed and muddied after some childish truancy, he makes up and recites his tale with "audacious face"—hears once more, what he has already heard "over and over and over," that Satan waits to carry off disobedient children and that all liars shall have their part in the Burning Lake—and so goes supperless, unhouseled, unaneled, to bed, to fall into those troubled dreams. "For often, after I had spent this and the other day in sin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep, with the apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, laboured to draw me away with them."

Very real, it appears, was the Elstow Devil, and much invoked in the training of the young; and threats and legends which would no more than scratch the mental epiderm of the stolid majority would pierce young Bunyan's imagination to the quick. No grand Miltonic Satan was this Devil (Milton not yet having limned him out), but instead something of a folk-lore Fiend; and once, at least, a sulphurous waft of

him blew strong and hot in the very neighbourhood of the Bunyan home.

For Bunyan—as specific as Luther in these particulars—must tell us how, upon a time, the keeper of a blind ale-house "about a bow-shot from where I once dwelt" was grievously plagued of the Evil One. "I saw him," he says (or makes Attentive say in his *Badman*), "in one of his fits, and saw his flesh gathered up on a heap, about the bigness of half an egg, to the unutterable torture and affliction of the old man." One Dr. Freeman, "more than an ordinary doctor," was called in to smudge the demon. "They had the possessed into an out-room, and laid him on his belly upon a form, with his head hanging over the form's end. Then they bound him down thereto; which done they set a pan of coals under his mouth, and put something therein which made a great smoke. . . . There, therefore, they kept the man till he was almost smothered, but no devil came out of him; at which Freeman was somewhat abashed, the man greatly afflicted, and I made to go away wondering and fearing." Very naturally! the infernal powers having this time struck very near home, "within a bow-shot," as it seems, of "Bonyon's End."

All this, with witchcraft, the Evil Eye and the like, very strange and repulsive to us, belonged to the atmosphere and setting of Bunyan's childhood. Thus there were times, as he tells us, when, in the midst of his childish games, he would

be distressed by sudden terrors, the foul fiends so luridly present in his dreams escaping out of them and into his daytime thoughts. It was in this way that it came to him to wish that he himself were a devil; that is to say, it seemed to little John rather less undesirable to be in fiery perdition as a tormenting fiend, and thus, so to say, in his proper element, than to be flung thither as the bad boy of Elstow.

Such, then, are the glimpses we are able to get of nine or ten-year-old John Bunyan : a pathetic little figure, very sensitive and volatile,—inside that tousled head of his such thoughts and ferments as no one could have guessed at. We shall probably be wise to believe that on the whole he was not so unhappy as these more lurid or sombre pictures might suggest. He was something of an irrepressible little gipsy ; he had his sports and playmates and the open country, and there was a wind on the heath.

What is clear in any case is that from the first he was very much of a character, and though this earlier Bunyan must seem a sort of negative of the Bunyan of the later years, showing as dark lines and shadows what later stand out as lucid qualities, yet the outline is much the same. Among his companions he shows himself a lord of language —bad language, as it happens ; and almost from the first he is a born story-teller, though in those earlier years the propensity, for sufficient reasons, passes under another name.

And for the rest, we need not be too critical

of Bunyan when he treats his childish misdemeanours with a certain heaviness of touch. With our all but omniscient modern psychology and our multitudinous textbooks on the crises of Adolescence we are apt to make light of the small rebellions of infancy; yet it is possible that in this matter we shall find Bunyan's psychology not wholly at fault.

(3)

In his youth young Badman goes from bad to worse. As he grows up he takes to robbing gardens and hen-roosts, and as for his father's goods, the lad's fingers are always itching for them. He is put out betimes as an apprentice to one of his father's acquaintance whose trade is "honest and commodious." This man, says Bunyan, was honest and devout, so that the lad wanted not for a good master, nor for good books, nor good instruction, nor good sermons, nor good examples, nor good fellow-servants. But not all of them together would do.

As for good sermons, it was young Badman's way in church either to fall asleep in a corner or else to fix his "wanton eyes" upon some "beautiful object" that was in the place, and so beguile himself all sermon-while. Or else, if he could sit among such as would fit his humour, he would be whispering and giggling and the like through the service. And as for good books, they might rot on their shelves, but he must fill his young head

with "beastly romances"—such, no doubt, as *Clem of the Clough*, *Ellen of Rummin* and *Bevis of Southampton*.

Thus he had not been with his master above a year-and-a-half when he fell in with "three young villains" who led him further into wickedness. These three, says Bunyan, shall be nameless: concerning which anonymity, and all similar suppressions in the Badman history, he makes the significant comment: "Why I have handled the matter in this manner is best known to myself." These three led Badman into drunkenness, vice and dishonesty, and the upshot of it all was that he presently broke his articles and ran away from his master.

As for young Bunyan himself, by direct testimony in his *Grace Abounding* and elsewhere we get this: that, save that his early dreams, terrors and compunctions were now out of mind, his wild youth was all of a piece with his ungovernable childhood. It may be that this wildness of his youth must be set over against the delicacy of some of his biographers in their account of him. Macaulay sees him as a young man of singular gravity and innocence, who probably never was drunk in his life, and whom a rector of the school of Laud would have held up to the whole parish as a model. Froude is positive that Bunyan was steady at his trade and was "never drunk." These unsolicited testimonials, with their emphasis upon his sobriety, have value for us in tempering the Puritan severity of his self-denunciation; yet,

when it comes to specific facts, we had better take Bunyan's own word. "Many a soul-poisoning meal," he tells us, "did I make out of divers lusts, as drinking, dancing, playing, pleasure with the wicked ones of the world."

He has, indeed, a particularly vivid and pungent piece of self-description, not easily quotable in polite biography. Suppose, he says, a family to be plagued with vermin, and "one or two of the family to be in chief the breeders; the quickest way to clear that family, or at least to weaken the so swarming of those vermin, is, in the first place, to sweeten the skin, head and clothes of the chief breeders, and then, though all the family should be apt to breed them . . . the greatness of that plague . . . will be impaired." He goes on to say that there are some who may be called the devil's chief sin-breeders. "I speak by experience. I was one of these lousy ones, one of these great sin-breeders; I infected all the youth of the town where I was born with all manner of youthful vanities. The neighbours counted me so; my practice proved me so; wherefore Christ Jesus took me first, and taking me first the contagion was much allayed all the town over. When God made me sigh, they would hearken and inquiringly say 'What's the matter with John?'" (*The Jerusalem Sinner Saved*, Offor, Vol. I, 78, 79.)

Whatever picture of Bunyan this calls up, it can hardly be that of Macaulay's model young man. Perhaps Southey comes nearer the mark when he

says that Bunyan was something of a young blackguard.

Young Badman gave way to drinking and "pleasure with the wicked ones of the world," and so did young Bunyan. Young Badman sailed very near the wind in the matter of pilfering and thieving and Bunyan says of himself that only by a miracle was he kept beyond the stroke of the law and public disgrace. He adds that, when he began to reform, one of the marks of it was a new tenderness of conscience about other people's property. "I durst not take a pin or a stick, though but so big as a straw, for my conscience now was sore and would smart at every touch." Young Badman had a disgust for good reading and was all for chapmen's trash, "beastly romances" and the like. Of himself Bunyan writes: "The Scriptures," thought I, "what are they? a dead letter, a little ink and paper of three or four shillings price. Give me a ballad, a news book, *George on Horseback* or *Bevis of Southampton* . . ." It may be, then, that Bunyan was still drawing from his own experience when he described Badman's apprenticeship to a tradesman of his father's acquaintance. It seems likely enough that if Thomas Bunyan was minded, as he was, to go to the expense of putting son John to school, it was because he was ambitious for him to better himself and not stick to the tinkering all his days: and an apprenticeship would be the next step.

But after this, at all events, the Badman parallel finally ends. For having followed young

Bunyan through childhood and early youth, we see him at sixteen weeping at the graveside of his mother. Within a month his sister Margaret is laid beside her. Within another month the stricken Thomas consoles himself with a third wife. And then, by sudden intrusion of national events, John is snatched away from Elstow and flung into new and strange experiences.

Chapter III — *The Soldier*

When the quarrel between Charles and Parliament passed from words to blows, Bedfordshire, being entirely on the Parliamentary side, saw no fighting save for a foray or two. It heard, however, the rattle of pikes and the roll of drums and saw its youth marched off to camp and garrison. Bunyan, it seems, was among them. He was no more than a boy, but in those days sixteen fell within the military age.

The curious fact is that all he will let us see of his soldiering is through the pin-hole of a solitary sentence. He relates how a comrade who did duty for him on a certain day was "shot into the head with a musket-bullet and died." In all his multitudinous writings this appears to be the only direct allusion to his employment in the army; though we might willingly have foregone a controversial dissertation or two (on women's prayer meetings as unscriptural, or on the question of the Perpetuity of a Seventh-day Sabbath) for a description at first hand of his military life.

(1)

We have only to contrast this reticence with Richard Baxter's communicativeness to realize our loss. Baxter writes of his brief army-life with something akin to martial spirit. He is all eyes and ears for the sights and sounds of camp and battlefield,—the fiery, saintly invalid, curiously drawn to the edge of a world in which he can take no active part.

Thus he recollects preaching at Alcester on a certain memorable Sabbath in the autumn of 1642, and contrives to let us hear the cannon from near-by Edgehill booming through his discourse. He takes us with him to Edgehill itself the morning after the battle; shows us the Earl of Essex holding the ground, the King's forces still facing him on a hill a mile or so away; points out, also, other and grimmer sights, not to be dwelt upon. He takes us into Cromwell's camp—"Oliver Cromwell coolly bade me welcome and never spoke to me more." He goes on to tell us that whereas in this camp he finds a few fiery, self-conceited men who bear the bell and make "all the noise and bustle," the greatest part of the common soldiers, especially of the foot, are "ignorant men of little religion"; in which latter class, though not in this camp, we may now include Private Bunyan.

If we follow Baxter a little further we shall be taken to Naseby and thence to Langport and Somerton, where, from a hill-top he will have us

watch the engagement between Goring and Fairfax. "The dust was so great, being in the very hottest time of summer, that they who were in it could scarce see each other, but I, who stood over them upon the brow of the hill, saw all." Much of this he contrives to make *us* see—the charge of Whalley's horse two abreast over the narrow bridge and up that "steep lane upon the mouth of those pieces"; the clash with Goring's cavalry "whilst you could count three or four hundred"; the wavering and final rout of the King's men; and, not least of all, the sudden breaking out into sonorous chaunt of Major Harrison. "I happened to be next to Major Harrison as soon as the flight began, and heard him with a loud voice break forth into the praise of God with fluent expressions, as if he had been in a rapture."

All this from Baxter, whose vivid pages would seem pale enough beside Bunyan's on a like theme; but Bunyan will tell us nothing, not even on which side he fought.

(2)

This reticence is challenging enough. If any man ever loved Valour with a lover's passion it was Bunyan, who wooed it as St. Francis wooed Poverty. He was by nature of the type to which sober folk give the name of madcap and dare-devil. He has told us that once, strolling in the fields with a friend, he saw an adder gliding across the roadway. He stunned it with his stick,

prised its mouth open and " plucked her sting out with my fingers "—believing, at any rate, that poison and death were there between finger and thumb. It seems to have been his way, when he saw a risk, to take it.

For such a nature—for a daring, foolhardy youth, active and well-set-up, the ringleader of his set, whose head was full of the stuff of popular romance and whose heart was full of the lust of adventure—war must have had a certain appeal. It offered him a chance to try the edge of his courage and prove his quality. In one sense it never ceased to hold his imagination. Upon it he built his allegory of Mansoul, and through *The Pilgrim's Progress* itself the clash of steel echoes from end to end. Greatheart's battles he describes as if he enjoyed them, and he must throw in far more detail than the requirements of the allegory can permit. Robert Louis Stevenson, as we should expect, is quick to notice this. " Look at Great-heart with his soldierly ways, garrison ways, as I had almost called them ; with his taste in weapons ; his delight in any that ' he found to be a man of his hands ' ; his chivalrous point of honour, letting Giant Maul get up again when he is down, a thing fairly flying in the teeth of the moral. . . . This is no Independent minister ; this is a stout, honest, big-busted ancient, adjusting his shoulder-belts, twirling his long moustaches as he speaks " (*Lay Morals* and Other Papers, 1925 Edn., p. 191). As it happened, John Gifford, whom Bunyan seems to

have had in his eye, filled both rôles very well; but the point is that Bunyan has the military type to the life and evidently loves it.

It is strange, then, that one so constituted should have trailed a pike in the most fateful of all our English wars and then should dismiss the whole experience in a single line. It may be said that the Restoration era was not a propitious time for a man to make much in public of his service under Fairfax and Cromwell. And beyond this, the Bunyan of the later years was nothing of a Cromwellian; he was very much of a Tory at heart and probably bitterly regretted his share in the Rebellion. "I look upon it," he writes, "as my duty to behave myself under the King's government, both as becomes a man and a Christian; and if an occasion were offered me, I should willingly manifest my loyalty to my Prince, both by word and deed."

But beyond this, again, his study of the New Testament developed in him a conscience against the appeal to the sword. Up to a point he became as pacifist as the Quakers. He would probably always have conceded that the Powers that be have the right to bear the sword; but for the people of God to unsheathe it in their own resistance of evil was not to be thought of. They must conquer by suffering, by love, by *soul-force*—not, as one might say, by Ironside methods, Rye House Plots or Monmouth risings.

"We are bid," he writes, during the tribula-

tion of the 'eighties, "to give thanks to God for all men, for kings and for all that are in authority. Because there is no man with whom we have to do, we doing as we should, but he bringeth some good thing to us or doth some good thing for us." A hard doctrine to expound in the days when Jeffreys was Lord Chief Justice! But he continues: "I have thought again, my brethren, since it is required of us that we give thanks to God for all these men, it follows that we do with quietness submit ourselves under what God shall do to us by them. For it seems a paradox to me to give thanks to God for them, and yet I am not willing (they) should abide in that place that God has set them in for me. I will then love them, bless them, pray for them, and do them good. I speak now of the men that hurt me. . . . And I will do thus because it is good so to do, because they do me good by hurting of me . . . and because I would be like my heavenly Father. 'Therefore if mine enemy hunger, let me feed him; if he thirst, let me give him drink'" (*Advice to Sufferers*, 1684).

This is the new Bunyan, who has "shaken his hands of all things here" and would wait upon God "in a way of close keeping to His truth." The martial ardour and lust for adventure are sublimated. Henceforth the wars that he will write of are in allegory. Here, among brittle pikes and smoking muskets, is the shadow-play; yonder in the unseen, in the region of the soul, are the real escarpments, battlements, beleaguerments,

assaults, treacheries, heroisms. "Who would true valour see" let him look thither!

(3)

Yet Bunyan's military career must continue to be of some interest. And in this matter it is still, perhaps, worth noting that Carlyle in his *Cromwell*, pursuing his hero through the wars, has an eye for Bunyan also. He sees him, as he believes, in the Parliamentary garrison at the siege of Leicester in the summer of 1645. "John Bunyan, I believe, is this night in Leicester—not yet writing his *Pilgrim's Progress* on paper, but acting it on the face of the Earth, with brown matchlock on his shoulder. Or rather *without* the matchlock just at present; Leicester and he having been taken the other day" (*Cromwell*, letter xxix).

In spite of Froude's opinion that Bunyan followed the King's colours, we may take it that Carlyle is right. Dr. John Brown, after exhaustive investigation, reaches the same conclusion, tracing Bunyan to Leicester by way of Newport Pagnell. He quotes a specimen Parliamentary ordinance providing, for the Newport Pagnell garrison, that "the county of Bedford within fourteen days shall send into it 225 able and armed men for souldiers"; and he argues that Bunyan was included in one or other of these levies. (*Life of Bunyan*, chap. iii.) The Governor of Newport at this period was the Bedford Knight who was the original of *Hudibras*

—Sir Samuel Luke (and, as we shall see later, Bunyan seems to have been interested enough to glance over that lampoon).[1] The Newport garrison in due course contributed a force under Major Ennis for the defence of Leicester, and a persistent tradition connects Bunyan with that siege. Dr. Brown's contention was later reinforced by Mr. E. G. Atkinson's discovery (1896), in the Public Record Office, of the muster-rolls of the Newport garrison, in which the name of a "John Bunion" appears as private or "centinel" from 1644 to 1647. There must have been many "John Bunions" in England at that time; there were four, at least, in Bedfordshire; but the evidence is good so far as it goes, and perhaps it is worth noting that Bunyan's first book (*Some Gospel Truths Opened*, 1656) bears the imprint: "*to be sold by Matthias Cowley, Bookseller in Newport Pagnell.*" It is as if Bunyan had turned to an old garrison-town acquaintance when he made his first venture in print.

Clarendon gives us some account of the Leicester siege and final assault, and since, at the breach in the southern wall, clouded in dust and smoke, we may guess dimly at the face of young Bunyan, the description is perhaps worth quoting. The Newport draft, under Major Ennis, defended a fortified position on the south side of the town, and held out with conspicuous bravery long after the rest of the town had surrendered.

[1] See Chap. x, p. 182, footnote.

"The whole [Royalist] army was drawn about the town, and the prince [Rupert], having taken a view of it, commanded a battery to be forthwith raised against an old high stone wall, on the south side of the town; which, by his own continued presence, was finished with admirable diligence; which done, he sent a summons to the governor [Mr. Loth-to-stoop !], who returned not such an answer as was required. And thereupon the battery began to play, and in the space of four hours made such a breach, that it was thought counsellable the same night to make a general assault with the whole army in several places; but principally at the breach [i.e. in the southern wall, manned by the Newport men], which was defended with great courage and resolution; insomuch that the King's forces were twice repulsed with great loss and slaughter; and were even ready to draw off in despair; when another party in the other side of the town . . . [aided, as in the siege of Mansoul, by disaffected townsmen] made way for their followers to follow them; so that by break of day, the assault having continued all the night, all the King's army entered . . ."

If, then, the Leicester clue holds, it was not so much *Pilgrim's Progress* which Bunyan, that summer night, was "acting on the face of the earth," but rather the *Holy War*,—the siege of the rebel city of Mansoul by the King's army, its defence by a stubborn garrison, the assault directed in person by the Prince.

"I saw the prince's arméd men come down
By troops, by thousands, to besiege the town.
I saw the captains, heard the trumpets sound,
And how his forces cover'd all the ground.

Yea, how they set themselves in battle array
I shall remember to my dying day.

. . . . . .

I saw the fights, and heard the captains shout,
And each in battle saw who faced about.

. . . . . .

I heard the cries of those that wounded were,
While others fought like men bereft of fear.

. . . . . .

Indeed, the captains did not always fight,
But then they would molest us day and night;
Their cry, '*Up, fall on*, let us take the town'
Kept us from sleeping or from lying down.
[And] I was there when the gates were broken ope,
And saw how Mansoul then was stript of hope.
I saw the captains march into the town,
How there they fought, and did their foes cut down."

(*Holy War.*)

By 1648—probably earlier—Bunyan had returned to Elstow, with the background of his life taking on a new setting under the Cromwellian settlement. The King was a prisoner; militant Puritanism was in power. It brought with it its own problems, to which Bunyan and many another humble soul were to react. One problem in particular we may mention here since we find it thrusting into his later career—the Puritan theory of the Sword. The Old Testament, the Sword of the Lord and of Gideon, had served its turn, but how was it to end?

In this year, 1648, Colonel Robert Hammond (the same to whom Charles had vainly fled from Hampton Court) writes of his qualms and heart-searchings to Cromwell. Hammond is clearly uneasy about the Old Testamentism of the martial saints, as if the New Testament, Christ's Cross, and the Way of Suffering were in danger of being forgotten. We find Cromwell replying to "dear Robin" at some length. Was it not (he argues) generally agreed that resistance is sometimes lawful? And was not *Salus Populi* a sound position?

And ought they to turn back on those who had ventured their lives upon explicit engagements? And was not the Army a lawful Power, called by God to oppose the King "upon stated grounds"? And if so, might not these recent and present actions be justified "*in foro humano*"? And was there no such thing as the leading of Providence? And had not the Saints, having gotten them matchlocks and pikes, and having made good use of them, been therein blessed "with defence and more"? In short, "I desire he that is for a principle of suffering [passive obedience] would not too much slight this. I slight not him who is so minded: but let us beware lest fleshly reasoning see more safety in making use of this principle than in acting." But indeed "our hearts are very deceitful," every way, and "reasonings may be but fleshly, either with [for] or against." The Lord teach us! (*Letters and Speeches.* Letter lxxxv: Carlyle.)

Meanwhile, Colonel Pride, with his regiment of foot, appears suddenly at Westminster and conducts his Purge. The unhappy members of the House, hustled away to "that place under the Exchequer which is commonly called Hell," inquire by what right he acts—and get their answer: "By the right of the sword." This was the new scheme of Thorough. Yesterday the pressing English question had been the Divine Right of Kings; now it was threatening to be the Divine Right of Colonels.

There was also, if we may note it here, the

problem of the Church ; very little of a problem as yet in Bunyan's Elstow, but one which was to affect him in due time. The authority of Prelacy and Prayer Book had been set aside. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and the Baptist societies now beginning to multiply, were far enough from Comprehension. New sects were appearing, coming to the surface in the boiling cauldron of zealotry : Fifth Monarchists, Ranters, Seekers, with nondescript fanaticisms which Carlyle must enumerate as " Feak-and-Powellisms," " Calvinistic Sansculottisms," " elements of soot and fire really copious ; fuliginous-flamy "—in the approved Carlylean style. Certainly mysticism, antinomianism, speculation, literalism were all very much in the air, with many projects for the saving of souls by curious devices. Not at all in the air, but rooted in the foundation of things, remained the bedrock of English and Puritan common sense ; with the figure of Cromwell himself, rock-like too, planted in the midst of the general confusions.

These were some of the elements in the new setting of Bunyan's life, now that he was about to enter upon his apprenticeship to religion. To these elements he was presently, in his own naïve way, to react. For the present he cared for none of them, but was turning with great heartiness from war to love.

(1)

As to this, it is plain that the beginning of Bunyan's reformation dates back to his courtship and marriage, which we may put somewhere about 1647–9. By this time, as we have seen, he had returned to Elstow with such added repute as his soldiering would give him among the youth of the village. Whatever his father's plans for him may have been, he had no trade in his fingers but the tinkering. To this he drifted and soon began to think of setting up a home for himself. Thus, as he tells us, he came to change his condition "into a married state."

Clearly it was a love-match. The pair came together, as he declares, "as poor as poor might be," not having "so much as a dish or spoon betwixt us both," and set up housekeeping in a humble thatched cottage in the village.

Young Mistress Bunyan had been strictly brought up: she knew her letters, and thus was educated above the average of her station; and we may take it that, in Bunyan's eyes, at any rate, she was like Mercy in *Pilgrim's Progress*, "of a fair countenance, and therefore the more alluring." At his worst and wildest Bunyan had a generous nature and a chivalrous sensibility. He tells us, for example, of a vile and blasphemous suggestion made to a young girl in his hearing "in Oliver's days." The thing, he says, greatly affected him, and he had a mind to accuse the offender before a magistrate, but the culprit "was a great man and I

was poor and young, but it troubled me very much" (*Life of Badman*). Thus, for all his noise and bravado, it was this quiet, well-principled girl "whose father had been counted godly," who took his fancy, and for love of her he was willing enough to mend his ways.

For her part, she saw more in her man than most of the village would credit him with, and she set herself to his betterment. Moreover, she had a right method. She worked by suggestion and emulation and would be "often telling of" him "what a godly man her father was." She got him into the way of going to the parish church twice a Sunday "and that with the foremost," and at home she would read with him in two pious books which her father had left to her. These books were *The Pathway to Heaven* by Arthur Dent of South Shoebury (a thorn in Whitgift's side in his day) and *The Practice of Piety* by Lewis Bailey, afterward Bishop of Bangor.

The two volumes (still to be picked up on the book-barrows) treat, in some sort, of the Christian walk and pilgrimage, and were esteemed in those days as heavenly manna, though much that is in them is by now "dry in the mouth as sawdust." Bailey's book runs into a series of meditations on the Misery of Infancy, Youth, Manhood, and Old Age, with similar musings on Death and the Hereafter; Dent's work is of different sort, singularly racy and pungent in parts, and full of the rare savour of Anglican Puritanism. "In these two

books," says Bunyan, "I should sometimes read with her, wherein I also found some things that were somewhat pleasing to me."

Thus, since our opportunities are limited, we may be glad of this not unpleasing glimpse of the young couple in their thatched cottage, reading by candle-light in the quiet of the Sabbath evening. Some echo and cadence of the girl-wife's voice still lingers, perhaps, over a passage or two of Bailey's little volume:

"*Lord, wherefore wast thou led to suffer out of the City?*
That I might bring thee to rest in the heavenly City.
Lord, wherefore were thy hands and feete nailed to the Crosse?
To inlarge thy hands to do the workes of righteousness; and to set thy feete at liberty to walk in the wayes of peace.
Lord, why did not the Souldiers devide thy seamelesse coat?
To shew that my Church is one without rent or scisme.
Lord, wherefore was thy side opened with a speare?
That thou mightest have a way to come nearer my heart"—

and Bunyan's sonorous bass, perhaps, in the more vigorous if less devout dialogue of Dent:

"*Oh Sir, you must beare with youth. Youth you know is fraile; and youth will bee youthfull, when you have said all that you can.*
Yes, but God doth allow no more libertie unto youth than unto age: but bindeth all upon paine of death to the obedience of his commandments. The wise man saith: Remember thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth. And further addeth: that if they will needes follow their lusts,

their pleasures, and their own swinge, yet in the end hee will . . . arraigne them, condemne them, and tame them in hell fire well enough.

Yet we see, men are so violently carried after their lust, and so desperately bent that they will have the present sweet and pleasure of sinne, come of it what will. Come sicknesse, come death, come hell, come damnation, they are at a point.

. . .

Sweet meate will have sowre sauce, and a dramme of pleasure a pound of sorrow. Such cursed caitifs shall at last pay a deare shot for their pleasures."

But Bunyan would not be unduly perturbed by his reading. He reckoned himself outside the range of Dent's artillery—behind the batteries rather than before them; and withal he was already armoured with a new self-esteem. He found himself a reader of pious books and something of a Churchman; we know without being told that he followed his trade more industriously and began to prosper accordingly; and the sight of him dressed and spruced for church on the Sabbath was something new in Elstow. As for Elstow parish church itself, it appears that in spite of the new regime the old forms of worship were still largely retained, and Bunyan fell under their spell. Here began the first phase of his religious development.

(2)

Mr. Chesterton has a lyrical passage describing the parish churches of Old England—the "leap and uplifting" of their Gothic arches, their

"balance of fighting gravitations" and flying buttresses, their stones "hurled at heaven in an arc as by the kick of a catapult," their symbols of God "tortured in stone and in silence," images of saints, and wild gargoyles "flung out into the sky" as devils "cast forth with a gesture." [1]

It may be that such a description does not sit easily upon the more or less unambitious but massive solidity of the old parish church of Bunyan's birthplace; but at least the huddle of low-roofed houses which was the Elstow of his day was presided over and spiritually dominated by that ancient sanctuary. What is more to the point, something of the æsthetic ecstasy which thrills through Mr. Chesterton's description has its rustic counterpart in the fervour of adoration with which Bunyan, in his own uninstructed fashion, now began to contemplate all its appointments.

He makes it clear to us that he found within the walls of Elstow church a means of escape out of drab actualities. All his faculties were captivated. His imagination, newly quickened and shooting upward, began to entwine itself around those reverend columns. For him, nave, altar, chancel, all the appointments of worship, were beglamoured and dissolved, by mystic enchantment, into ethereal forms and elements. When, years later, he came to write of it all, it was with a force and vehemence which witnessed to the power of those early impressions.

[1] *Life of Cobbett*, chap. v, pp. 153-4.

"I adored, and that with great devotion, even all things, both the high place, priest, clerk, vestment, service, and what else belonging to the church: counting all things holy that were therein contained, and especially the priest and clerk most happy, and, without doubt, greatly blessed, because they were . . . principal in the holy temple. . . . This conceit grew so strong in little time upon my spirit, that had I but seen a priest, though never so sordid and debauched in his life, I should find my spirit fall under him, reverence him, and knit unto him; yea, I thought for the love I did bear unto them . . . I could have lain down at their feet, and have been trampled upon by them; their name, their garb, and work, did so intoxicate and bewitch me" (*Grace Abounding*).

Not Laud himself could have wished for an obedience more fervent and unquestioning. There was, indeed, no limit to Bunyan's submission. He was ignorant, it is true, but his ignorance was of the kind which the priesthood has always been able to bless—it was docile, even abject. At this period Bunyan was, in fact, a primitive being, in some respects as ingenuous and elemental as if he had been reared on the banks of the Congo and not the Ouse. His appetent intellect was uncritical; his mind leaned to authority; his imagination responded vaguely to religious symbolism, feeling the lure of its sensuous appeal and playing upon the border-line between mysticism and magic. With such a nature, so eager, so intense, so impressionable, one might have supposed that the Church could have done what it pleased.

What the Church did actually accomplish for Bunyan must not be overlooked. It was through the writings of two Churchmen, Dent and Bailey, that "some desires to religion" were first stirred up within him. It was under the preaching of his own parish minister, Christopher Hall, that he received that stroke of conscience which smote him broad awake. It is likely that the order and reverence of the older forms continued to influence him long after he had broken with them. It seems as if it revived in the later years to accentuate his dislike for that loose and flatulent kind of public devotion which burlesques the liberty of "free" worship and degrades it into license. "It is at this day wonderful common," he wrote four years before his death, "for men to pray extempore. . . . He is counted nobody now, that cannot at any moment, at a minute's warning, make a prayer of half-an-hour long." He adds that he is not against extempore prayer, "for I believe it to be the best kind of praying"; but he is jealous that "there are a great many such prayers made, especially in pulpits and public meetings," that are without the Holy Ghost and therefore unedifying. "Wit and reason and notion are now screwed up to a very great height; nor do men want words or fancies or pride to make them do this thing" (*Pharisee and Publican*, Offor's Edn., Vol. II, 217–277).

As for that first stroke of conscience, the story is familiar, but since it stands in vital sequence to the great crisis of his life, we may turn to it here.

(3)

Dent, in his *Pathway*, already cited, has much to say of the prevalent sin of Sabbath-breaking. "Many will heare a Sermon in the forenoone and they will take that to be as much as God can require at their hand, and that hee is somewhat beholden unto them for it, but as for the afternoone, they will have none; then they will to bowles or tables . . . some running to dancing and bear-baiting: some sit upon their stalles, some sit in their shops, some by the fire-side, some goe to the stoole-ball, and other looke on. O miserable wretches! O cursed catifes! O monstrous hell-hounds!"

All this, and much more to like purpose (as of certain singular and terrible judgments visited upon Sabbath-breakers), Bunyan and his good wife would read together out of the vicar of Shoebury's awakening book. But Bunyan, now going to church twice a Sunday, and that with the foremost, was disposed, though not without misgiving, to think himself free thereafter to take his pleasure. However, upon a time, Parson Hall must preach a thundering sermon against Sunday sport in general, and that with such directness and point that Bunyan had to believe the discourse had been made on purpose against himself. It seems that it took a good dinner to put out of his thoughts the discomfort of that sermon; but dinner being over (and in some defiance of the parson) he was to his play again with the youth

of the village—amongst them, perhaps, the future great-grandfather of our aged John Rogers. Then, as we well know, something happened upon which not great-grandfather Rogers nor any other mortal but Bunyan himself could ever fully report.

What ancient John Rogers could have recalled at most, in after years, was that the game that afternoon was tip-cat, and that just now John Bunyan had struck the peg a fair blow from the hole; that, club in hand, he strode after it and stooped to strike it a second time; that he then hesitated, pulling himself up and standing for an instant like one who heard an unexpected call; and that after that second or two of hesitation he lustily struck the peg again, and so on with the game.

What we now understand is, that in Bunyan's soul, and for that instant between the first and second blow, eternity took the place of time. We understand that in that instant, as he stood thus, club in hand, multitudinous accusing memories and despairing thoughts passed with incredible swiftness through his mind. "Suddenly," he says, having heard that Voice from heaven and seen "with the eyes of" his "understanding" the Lord Jesus looking down upon him in displeasure,—"suddenly this conclusion was fastened on my spirit, for the former hint did set my sins again before my face, that I had been a great and grievous sinner, and that it was now too late for me to look after heaven. . . . Then I fell to musing upon this also; and while I was thinking on it, and fearing lest it should be so, I felt my

heart sink in despair, concluding it was too late; and therefore I resolved in my mind I would go on in sin; for, thought I, if the case be thus, my state is surely miserable; miserable if I leave my sins, and but miserable if I follow them." All this, and more, in that instant of eternity between one blow and the next. "Thus I stood in the midst of my play, before all that there were present; but yet I told them nothing; but having made this conclusion I returned desperately to my sport again."

As we know, this first droop of the soul into spiritual despair was of short duration. It left him not by reason of any ghostly counsel or emergence of faith, but because he fell upon the discovery that he could speak good English. It seems, that is to say, that he was shocked out of his habitual profanity by an unexpected rebuke, which deliverance so restored his self-esteem that he renewed his hope of becoming, like his godly father-in-law before him, a "practitioner of piety."

The fortunate rebuke came, he tells us, from a woman, "a very loose and ungodly wretch," while he was standing at her shop-window, "cursing and swearing and playing the madman." She appeared before him, framed in the doorway of her shop, to protest with the shrill vehemence of her kind that he was the ungodliest fellow for swearing that ever she had heard in all her life, and that to hear him put her all of a tremble. He gives us the picture of himself, thus berated, standing there by the shop window, his glib

tongue suddenly silenced, his head hanging down for shame, his heart secretly wishing he might be a little child again " that my father might learn me to speak without this wicked way of swearing."

Thus somehow, with the shock of that sudden rebuke from so unlikely a quarter, and to his own great wonderment, this " wicked way " fell from him, so that " whereas, before, I knew not how to speak unless I put an oath before and another behind, to make my words have authority, now I could without it speak better, and with more pleasantness than ever I could before."

It is easy to see that to Bunyan this must have been a matter of great pleasantness. It was the discovery of an art. His gift of language now awoke in him, or if it was active before, so that his very eloquence in profanity was but a perversion of it, it now began to find its true expression. " I was a great wonder to myself," he confesses. Trundling his tinker's chair up and down the countryside, or sitting in the stithies and ale-houses, or gaming with his fellows on the green, he continued to wonder at himself for the new and clean mouth that had been given him.

Moreover, he fell in with a certain " poor man " of godly conversation (no more than a Mr. Talkative, as it turned out, for he went over presently to the profane Ranters) who would talk to him pleasantly of the Scriptures. Thus he betook him to his Bible, wherein, no doubt to his further wonderment, he found great pleasure in reading the historical parts. Thus he was already

the "man with a book in his hand," though not yet crying out for his life.

(4)

Bunyan was now more than ever the exemplary Churchman, and there was no small to do about his reformation. "Our neighbours," he tells us, "did take me to be a very godly man, a new and religious man, and did marvel much to see such a great and famous alteration in my life and manners." They spoke well of him and encouraged him, as he says, both to his face and behind his back; all of which gives us a pleasant glimpse of these good Elstow folk.

And in truth there was much that was attractive in Bunyan's simple piety at this time. "I did set the Commandments before me for my way to heaven; which Commandments I also did strive to keep, and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well sometimes, and then I should have comfort; yet now and then I should break one, and so afflict my conscience; but then I should repent, and say I was sorry for it, and promise God to do better next time, and there got help again." A century later John Wesley would certainly have received him, on that showing, into Methodist fellowship.[1]

[1] "The having a real desire to flee from the wrath to come was the only condition required of them. Whosoever, therefore, 'feared God and worked righteousness' was qualified for this society" (John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions*, Edn. 1838, Vol. III, p. 264).

We may speculate, however, as to how it would have gone with him had he got no further in personal religion than this. One thing is above speculation—we should never have had the Dream. It is arguable that his imaginative sense of men and things and his gift of pungent observation might yet have brought forth something worthy of survival—might have produced, for instance, a *Life of Badman*; but Bunyan's genius was fundamentally evangelical and needed for its release an experience far more inward and vital than anything to which he had yet attained.

For the rest, he was still a rustic with a closed mind to general affairs. As such, at least, he seems to have gone through the war, and there is no hint that the political and national events of this later period interested him. One exception, however, there must have been. About this time good Philip Henry goes up to London and finds himself drawn into the crowd massing before Whitehall gate. He notes the troops "immediately marching from-wards Charing Cross to Westminster" and "from-wards Westminster to Charing Cross," all on purpose (he must believe) "to masker the people"; finally observes something else, also, at the instant whereof "there was such a Grone by the thousands then present as I never heard before and desire I may never hear again." It was the execution of the King.

Beyond this we have Dunbar and Worcester, the flight of Charles II, and a certain scene in Parliament when the Lord General Cromwell,

clad in "plain black clothes and gray worsted stockings," and saying many things in "untuneful voice," presently clears the House and walks home with the keys in his pocket.

For Bunyan, an event of greater moment than any national happening was the drifting into Bedford town of a certain swashbuckling Royalist major and refugee, by the name of Gifford.

(5)

To this remarkable John Gifford it is possible that full justice has yet to be done. He is easily the most arresting figure in the Bunyan story; and it may be, also, that he was the only one among Bunyan's immediate associates who had anything of the stature of genius. Save for the Pastoral Letter (see Appendix) which he wrote in his last illness, no works of his have come down to us; but, even so, those who turn to that letter will know its author for no ordinary gospeller. They will note in it a breadth of charity uncommon enough in those disputatious times, and a sagacity and mellowness of spirit rare enough at any time. They will note something else. Bunyan fetched his style from the English Bible; but to read Gifford is to see that the tinker, before ever he set pen to paper for treatises of his own, had constantly before him in Gifford's preaching a good example of the handling of Bible English.

How Gifford himself came by such a style is another question. His career, as we know, was strange and, so to say, breathless enough. He was

a Kentish man of good family and of some education. Through the Civil War he fought on the King's side, holding the rank of major. He drew sword again in the Kentish rising of '48, took part in the desperate fighting around Maidstone, and, with eleven others of the captured garrison, was condemned by Fairfax to be hanged. "Ye night before he was to dye," says the contemporary chronicle, "his sister coming to visit him and finding the sentinells that kept the doore asleep, and those also his companions within heavy through drinke, she told him of the doore and the watch that stood before it, and intreated him to take the opportunity to escape and save his life, which also he did and passed through them all, there being, as it were, a deep sleep from the Lord upon them." (See Brown's *Bunyan*, chap. v.)

For three days he lay in hiding in a ditch, the hue and cry all around him, then escaped, disguised, to London, and at last, finding asylum here and there among the Royalist gentry, drifted to Bedford, married, and settled down to the practice of medicine. All the while he was very much of a swashbuckler, and free with the wine-cup and dice-box. "He was given," says the Bedford record, to "dumpish fitts" and mad excesses—"wild things in the town, of public notoriety"—and often had it in his mind "to kill bro: Harrington, meerly from that great antipathy that was in his heart against the people of God and the holynes of the Gospell."

Suddenly he was "mightily laid hold upon"

and changed as it were overnight through the reading of a Puritan book. There was in Bedford a small unorganized group of Dissenters, some of them citizens of influence. Gifford now "thrust himself into their company," carried their confidence by assault, organized them into a society, broke out into exhorting and preaching, became their minister, and gathered a congregation drawn from the town and surrounding villages. This was in 1650, when Bunyan was still a promising parishioner of Christopher Hall's. Five years later Gifford finished his course.

It would be easy, upon a superficial judgment, to write him down for a fanatic; and in truth his passage from the life of a rakish cavalier to that of a Puritan pastor was an exchange of worlds so sudden and violent that he might have been pardoned much crudity and excess. The fact is, that within a year of his sudden conversion, and upon a basis so sound and broad that its principles have needed no revision, he founded a local communion which flourishes to this day. What he established was in purpose and fact a union church, and it seems clear that it is to Gifford we must trace that conception of churchmanship which Bunyan was later to defend against the sectaries of his day. In an era of narrow and peevish bigotries Gifford conceived of a church whose sole essentials for communion were faith in Christ and honest endeavour after holiness of life. By these principles "without respect to this or that circumstance or opinion in outward

or circumstantiall things" he inspired his people to hold together.

This, to anticipate, was the society to whose fellowship Bunyan, after he had "propounded his desire," was admitted in the year 1653. In the same year Cromwell's commissioners, satisfied that Gifford had the root of the matter in him, appointed the ex-major to the sequestrated living of St. John's Church, Bedford.

(6)

But to return to Elstow and to 1650: Bunyan's own criticism of his promising reformation under Christopher Hall was that it was motived by egotism. That is to say, he was going about seeking to establish himself in a peace of mind and soul founded upon moral self-satisfaction. He was, as he puts it, driven with the winds and tossed headlong upon the Covenant of Works. Those to whom this remains altogether a dark saying will find all that follows of Bunyan's epic struggle likewise dark to them.

The fact is that at this time and in his own way, young Bunyan, like young Luther at an earlier time, was out to multiply austerities; in which exercise, amid much pride of self-discipline, the dormant dreads which plagued his childhood awoke again so that he had fears of some sudden stroke of judgment descending before his righteousness was well accomplished. No more pleasuring, then! no more Sabbath sport—bell-ringing—dancing! Having earned golden

opinions, both his own and his neighbours', by giving up profanity and the like, and because self-approbation, touched with conscience and an idealizing imagination and pricked forward by fear of judgment, must continually be reassuring itself with fresh exploits, Bunyan was at pains to perfect his reputation for righteousness. A hard struggle, this renunciation of choice delights, and dancing (a revealing side-light) was abandoned only after a twelvemonth's struggle and dalliance : but conscience was now like a horse-leech at the vein and must bleed his pleasures white.

Here ends, then, the interlude between Bunyan's early blackguardism and his later Puritanism. Now was to begin a new phase, a period of supreme conflict. For, unlike Gifford, Bunyan was to make his change of worlds by slow stages and through painful and all but unendurable processes. Surrounding him were diverse elements—conventional, fanatical, mystical, worldly —through which, without learning or much of human guidance, he had to pick his course, and there were times when he was as one adrift among shoals and whirlpools. He stands before us at last not, indeed, as an ecclesiastical sea-lord, decorated and magnificent, but at least as one who has done business in great waters and seen God's wonders in the deep ; a plain, weather-beaten mariner of faith, whose calling we recognize not by his titles and livery, but, so to say, by his gait and bearing and by the salt of his speech.

One of the few pleasures left to Bunyan at this time was his new-found delight in good English, and it may be said that this artistic sensibility to words helped to lure him into the way of the next great crisis in his life.

(1)

For upon a certain day (we may place it about 1650) the good providence of God cast him to Bedford to work at his tinkering, and in one of the streets he came where three or four poor women of Gifford's flock were sitting at a door in the sun and talking of the things of God. We observe that what, among other things, Bunyan noticed was that these poor women spake "with great pleasantness of Scripture language." That is to say, the good Bible-English of these humble folk was in itself a peculiar attraction to Bunyan at this time, and we observe him moving his tinker's chair to where he could the better hear them while he busied himself with his grinding and soldering. But, beyond this, he found much more to marvel at. For the talk of these women was of the

New Birth and the work of God in their hearts, and how He had visited them with His love in Christ, and how, against all the temptations of Satan, He had refreshed them with the promises of Scripture; all of which Mr. Gifford in his doctrinal and experimental preaching was now setting forth in Bedford Sabbath after Sabbath, but Bunyan had picked up nothing of it.

But perhaps what he had to observe chief of all was these poor women's evident freedom and joy of heart: "methought they spake as if joy did make them speak." This was what Bunyan found himself marvelling at, until the work fell away from his hands and he was listening with might and main. He could never forget that when, standing there in the shadows, he first set eyes on them, the sun was lighting up that side of the street where they were gathered and was paving it, so to say, with that gold which we read of in Revelation as belonging to the streets of the City of God. He could never forget that scene, and the sight of them sitting there in that golden light came to be framed in his memory as a sort of dream picture or allegory. They were in his eyes as if they sat in heavenly places, as if, indeed, they had found their soul's world, and had the freedom of it, and sat in the glory of it, and were glad.

In point of fact, this picture so dwelt with him that he had to dream it all over again. He saw these poor women, he tells us, set as if on the sunny side of a high mountain, there refreshing

themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while he himself, under dark clouds, was shivering and shrinking in the cold. Thus in his dream he found himself vehemently desiring to join them and to comfort himself in that light and warmth which they enjoyed ; but between him and them was a wall which he sought to scale but could not, for it was very high. But at length, and after much prying, he found a strait gate or doorway through which, with great effort, he contrived to get, first his head, and after that, by a sidling striving, his shoulders and so his whole body. So then he was glad and went and sat down in the midst of them and was comforted with the light and heat of their sun.

Now it would be curious to see how a modern psychologist of the Freudian school would set about it to interpret such a dream as this. Bunyan, however, had no difficulty in the matter. He has left us his own full and satisfying interpretation, finding the clue to it in a "drive" more potent even than that which so engages the Freudian mind. And at any rate, from this Bedford incident onward, Bunyan knew what he wanted and what at all costs he must have. In that confused and shaken England, and in his own shaken and unquiet heart, what he wanted and must have was this freedom of his soul's world, this inward assurance, this sense of grace and hope of glory.

"I should often," he tells us, "make it my business to be going again and again into the com-

pany of these poor people ; for I could not stay away." That is to say, Bunyan—to adopt Newman's figure of speech concerning his own great change—was on his death-bed as regards his worship in Elstow parish church, where, since his marriage, he had found so much that had excited him to better ways. Suddenly, without warning, we see good Parson Hall, with all priests, clerks, vestments and high places, fade out of the picture, and Gifford and his flock take their place. For at this critical stop in his life, and for all that he had been so zealous for the ritual and order of the Church, Bunyan cast his lot with the Puritans, and did so with such a suggestion of inevitableness that it seemed less a matter of reasoned choice than the awakening and assertion within him of some law of his spiritual being.

And then, beyond all this, Bunyan was henceforth a Pilgrim in sober earnest, long to be weighed down by a burden grievous to be borne, long to go floundering and flouncing in sloughs and quags, clambering painfully up difficult ascents, plunging into dark and dreadful ravines ; but a Pilgrim always, with his face set to go up to where on the far heights a great light was shining.

(2)

It is here no part of our concern to reproduce in detail the story of Bunyan's mental strife. He himself has told it for all time, and with great particularity, in his *Grace Abounding*, and not only with great particularity but also with a

poignancy of phrase which stabs the mind and memory.—"The glory of the holiness of God did break me to pieces."—"I could have changed hearts with anybody"—"If I would have given a thousand pounds for a tear, I could not shed one."—"This one consideration would always kill my heart: My sin was point blank against my Saviour."—"I was often as if I had run upon the pikes, and as if the Lord had thrust at me to keep me from him."—"Nothing now for two years together would abide with me but damnation."—"The Philistines understand me not."—"Down fell I, as a bird that is shot from the top of a tree, into great guilt and fearful despair."

"The Philistines," says Bunyan, "understand me not"; and it may be admitted, by that token, that there is much in his unexampled record to put us all in Philistia. We may compassionate Bunyan, we may psychologize him; we can very exhaustively psychologize him; but it is probable we shall hardly be able thoroughly to understand him. For example, it is true of Bunyan, in a sense in which it is unlikely to be true of us, that the sorrows of death compassed him and the pains of hell gat hold upon him. Few of us, indeed, if we interrogated our hearts with anything of a Puritan thoroughness, would be disposed to doubt our individual capacity for damnation. Moreover it is conceivable that a serious fear breaking in upon us, that, in a universe working inexorably toward certain ends, one may find

oneself involved in fiery and damnatory possibilities—it is conceivable that such a fear might well be salutary; and it may yet appear that the darker aspects of the Puritan faith were after all dark with the shadow of some looming reality. But in all this, as it seems, Bunyan is not for us to understand.

Perhaps the point to observe here is that he prolonged his sorrows with a strange, perverted ingenuity of self-torture. It was his error to be casting about in his own heart for the wherewithal for a proper experience—for such an experience as the choicest of Gifford's saints so manifestly enjoyed. Just as over his forge he had fettled up many a faulty vessel, so now, over the fires of his new-kindled zeal, he would tinker his condition into something presentable and praiseworthy. So that, from now on, for many a long day, Bunyan himself became Bunyan's absorbing study—Bunyan himself in his moods and temptations, his lifts and falls; and ever above him like a sky and beneath him like an abyss, the eternities of heaven and hell.

"As for secret thoughts," says he, "I took no notice of them." That was in the days before he fell in with Gifford's folk. But now it was all the other way. "I sat by the fire in my house, musing on my wretchedness": that is the recurring picture; and when he is not analysing his own secret thoughts, death, judgment and eternity confront him with demands upon conscience and imagination which come near to

blotting out all temporal concerns. This heaven, this hell, these looming infinitudes—these are the great things; friends, kindred, business, politics, your Charleses and your Olivers—these belong to the vain show of things and must pass. What is this whole visible world but a shadow to be grasped at in vain? There were, indeed, at this time two things that made Bunyan wonder: the one, he tells us, was the sight of aged folk still pursuing the things of this life as if they should live here for ever; the other was when he found religious men and women making great to-do about their temporal losses ("as of husband, wife, child, etc."). "'Lord,' thought I, 'what ado is here about such little things as these! . . . My soul is dying! My soul is damning!'"

And so, amid the crash and uproar of national events, he sits solitary, musing by his fireside, or mopes through the fields, bemoaning his wretchedness under the copes of heaven. Like poor Teufelsdröckh, he finds himself in very truth a feeble unit in the midst of a threatening infinitude, with nothing given to him but eyes to discern his own miseries. How enviable in those hollow eyes of his, the quiet oxen that chewed the cud in the Elstow fields, the rooks that chattered garrulously in the trees, the very toads that croaked in the sloughs and puddles! No doubts nor dooms for them! No everlasting hell-fires for them! "Now I blessed the condition of the dog and toad, and counted the estate of everything that God made far better than this dreadful

state of mine . . . they had no soul to perish under the everlasting weights of hell and sin as mine was like to do." "Oh, how gladly would I have been anybody but myself!"—ay, "anything but a man!"

It seems, indeed, as if in all this Bunyan must gather up into his own soul experiences almost beyond the capacity of any one individual consciousness. The whole race of man travails in him. In his reactions he is now primitive, now mediaeval, now modern; he is mystic, he is literalist; he is Western, Oriental, African. Thus we behold him full of primitive terrors, in dread of dooms and demons, plagued with impulses to worship bulls and pray to besoms. Presently he sounds the Oriental despair of existence and could wish himself a beast, bounded by a merciful oblivion, that he might escape the sorrows of the soul. And then, having thrilled betimes to the Mediaeval appeal of Holy Church, he is flung into rationalist doubts and speculations, curiously modern.—Is there a God? Is the Bible a trustworthy revelation? "Everyone doth think his own religion rightest, both Jews and Moors and Pagans: and how if all our faith and Christ and Scripture, should be but a think-so too?" What if the Pauline gospel were of Paul's inventing? What if sin were "no such grievous thing after all"? And then again, what if he has committed the sin unpardonable? What if he is not of the elect? And so through an all but endless variety of doubts and questionings, faced

and desperately encountered, while Izaak Walton, with rod and basket, was wandering in great content by stream and river ; while Dorothy Osborne (near by, in Bedfordshire) was playing at Shuttlecock for the spleen and turning from Henry Cromwell to write her immortal love-letters to William Temple ; while young Evelyn was touring in France and Italy and already posting his Diary to some purpose, and young Isaac Newton was attending village-school, still quite innocent of the Binomial Theory or the Differential Calculus.

Some comfort it would have been for poor Teufelsdröckh could he, like Faust, have known himself tempted and tormented of the Devil. That grim solace, at least, was vouchsafed to Bunyan, but almost no other. Through those years of darkness his mind remained the cockpit wherein all the fierce besetments that can afflict the religious nature contended for the mastery. No full transcript of such conflict could there be. Bunyan himself, with all his particularity, can report upon it only in outlines and sketches, viewing all in the illusion of memory. What we miss are the nameless reliefs, the unnumbered irrelevant incidents and saving trivialities by means of which the suffering mind is able in some measure to cheat its sorrows.

We may take it that in part Bunyan's sanity was saved by such unrecorded, Providential lulls and distractions. He was much in the open air. His work took him abroad through the country-

side. There were the mechanic exercise of his craft, the claims of his growing family, the appeal of his little blind child, his love for the girl-wife whom it had been " his mercy " to marry. There was also the sympathy of Gifford's people, and, later, the friendship and good counsel of Gifford himself. " I began to break my mind to those poor people in Bedford, and to tell them my condition, which, when they had heard, they told Mr. Gifford of me, who himself also took occasion to talk with me, and was willing to be well persuaded of me, though I think but from little grounds ; but he invited me to his house. . . ." No doubt there was also the deep, subconscious sense of vocation and destiny whispering up to him that he had yet a part to play, a mission to perform.

Withal, only an iron frame, a granite endurance, could have taken the impost of a burden so crushing and continuous ; and thrice, at least, he was near to complete collapse. " I was struck," he tells us, " into a very great trembling, insomuch that sometimes I could, for whole days together, feel my very body, as well as my mind, to shake and totter. . . . Thus did I wind and twine and shrink under the burden that was upon me ; which burden also did so oppress me that I could neither stand, nor go, nor lie, either at rest or quiet." He was in truth sore broken in the place of dragons and covered with the shadow of death.

(3)

We may turn to his Deliverance.

Had Bunyan been born before the Reformation, or had his lot been cast to live in Southern Europe, his name might still have come down to us. Visions and Voices, conflicts with the Devil (who will even twitch his clothes when he prays), and waftings as of angels' wings—of these we might still have read, together with much legendary embellishment; and good Friar John might have followed a wide and memorable preaching itinerary. But in the providence of God Bunyan was born within the Reformed Church in a militant era, and it was in the environment of a broad Independency that his experience was to develop. It may be said that he, of all Englishmen of his time, or of any other time, stands out as the man with the Book in his hands. Thus when Quaker Anne Blackley appealed to him in daring and rhetorical expostulation to "throw away the Scriptures" (she must have meant no more than that he should discard his too literalist use of them in debate) his reply was prompt: "*Nay, for then the Devil would be too hard for me!*" It was no more than the truth. The decisive authority of priests, sacraments and Holy Church, on the one hand, and of the Inner Light on the other, were not for him. His dependence, so far as he could give account of it, was upon the literal Word.

Thus it is notable that all the turns and lifts

of his experience at this time are associated with specific texts of Holy Scripture, and the Apocrypha will serve only at a pinch. Again and again in his spiritual memoirs, the mood, the text, the scene are framed for us together. So he is "travelling into the country," musing upon the enmity in his heart toward God; or "moping in the fields," bemoaning his hard hap; or "sitting on a settle" in a Bedford street, feeling that the very cobble-stones, and the tiles on the houses, are "set against him"; or "walking to and fro in a good man's shop," afflicting himself with self-abhorrence; or "walking under a hedge" of a morning, "full of sorrow and guilt, God knows"—when, in each several instance, some specific text comes "bolting in upon him" and for a while commands silence upon "those tumultuous thoughts" which "like masterless hell-hounds" would "roar and bellow and make a hideous noise" within him.

Yet, even at this period, he may not be fairly classed among the literalists. With all his dependence upon the letter of Scripture, his use of it was mystical and imaginative and nearer to the Quaker method than he himself would ever have admitted. In this matter one has only to compare *Grace Abounding* with *Fox's Journal* to note the similarity of Scriptural approach. In both cases it is highly subjective, and at this stage Bunyan was as dependent as Fox upon mystical "openings." The text is his authority, but he can employ it only as each word authenticates

itself as speaking directly to his own condition. For example, he tells us that once, for a fortnight or more, he had been eyeing the text, "My grace is sufficient for thee," but thought it could not "come near" his soul. Then presently the four words, "My grace is sufficient," do "come," but he has to wait long for the remainder. Suddenly, however, at Meeting, the complete text breaks upon him "three times together" to his great rejoicing. (See *Grace Abounding.*)

Thus, with intense mental anguish straining his faculties to the highest pitch, he comes to feel as if the great words of Scripture are less printed messages than living messengers. They are the angels that minister to him, warning him, threatening him, barring him from his heart's Eden with sword of flame; presently, and more and more frequently, inviting him, encouraging him, surprising him with sudden visits, "touching" him, engaging him in colloquy, refreshing him with "sweet glances." Sometimes, also, there is a desperate conflict and antiphony of texts. He is put to flight by some armed and minatory Scripture, and thus fleeing before its face, he hears a Promise call as if running after him. This, he tells us, makes him stop and "look over his shoulder," when some other rebuking word puts him to flight again; but in the distance there is still the voice of the Promise "as if it did holloa after me." By and by desperation teaches him to leap into the bosom

of a Promise whether he can command the right feeling or no.

Apart from all evangelical considerations, those who know anything of the mind's behaviour in times of acute tension will not be disposed to cavil at all this. For it is true that at such times the mind must find relief far less in long and laboured argument than in some sudden in-flash of thought through remembered phrase or mental image. One thinks of Carlyle's letter to Thomas Erskine : "The other night, in my sleepless tossings about, which were growing more and more miserable, these words [the opening sentences of the Lord's Prayer], that brief and grand prayer, came strangely into my mind, with an altogether new emphasis ; as if *written*, and shining for me in mild, pure splendour, on the black bosom of the Night there ; when I, as it were, *read* them word by word,—with a sudden check to my imperfect wanderings, with a sudden softness of composure which was much unexpected." Like Carlyle, Bunyan had by this time a memory stored with Scripture, ready in the important hour to shine for his comfort "on the black bosom of the Night."

(4)

There were other aids. In 1653, midway in this conflict of soul, he was admitted into membership in Gifford's church. "They would pity me," says Bunyan of his fellow-members, "and would tell me of the Promises." No doubt it is

true that save for a few elect spirits, his travail of mind and soul was beyond them, but it was not unsalutary for him to be cast at this period among folk who, with all their virtues, were of common clay and likely to react heavily enough to his humours. And certainly his passage from Elstow parish church to Gifford's congregation was not a passage from a sedate communion to a narrow and fanatical sect. Such sects there were, but Gifford's society was not of their number. Gifford may have cast a troubled eye now and again upon certain irrepressible brethren, whose public devotions did not make for edification (" God hath not gifted, I judge, every brother to be a mouth to the church ") ; but for the greater part his people probably erred on the stolid side, and just now they were in danger from their new and prosperous status. Even in New England, where the Puritan genius had it all its own way, the Puritan communions were far enough from being equalitarian (" That ye fore seat in ye front Gallery shall be equall in dignity with ye 2nd seat in ye Body of ye meeting-house. . . . That ye 2nd seat in ye front Gallery and ye hinde seat in ye front Gallery shall be equall in dignity with ye 5th seat in ye Body," etc. *Puritan Republic*, D. W. Howe, p. 167) ; and in Bedford Gifford had need to admonish his own flock against worldly discriminations. " 'Tis not a good practice to be offering places or seats when those who are rich come in ; especially it is a great evil to take notice of such in time of prayer

or of the Word; then are bowings and civil observances at such times not of God." On the other hand they were not slow to recognize the gifts of a local brother who certainly had no worldly claim to the dignity of the fore-seats.

Specifically, Bunyan had for his help the preaching and counsel of Gifford, and Martin Luther's *Commentary on Galatians*. "At this time I sat under the ministry of holy Mr. Gifford, whose doctrine, by God's grace, was much for my stability"—seasonable to his soul, he must add, as the former and latter rain. As for Luther's book, God, says Bunyan, did cast it one day into his hand, a volume so old that it was ready to fall piece from piece if one did but turn it over. Piece from piece that particular volume has no doubt fallen this long while and passed into utter dissolution, but we may still in imagination turn over its faded leaves and judge for ourselves what it must have meant to Bunyan. For just as the morbid story of Francis Spira had been to Bunyan's sore mind (as he tells us) as knives and daggers and as salt rubbed into raw wounds, so Luther's book was to him as wine and oil, as food and salve and medicine.

We may suppose that what fell into his hands was the English version of 1576 (*A Commentarie of Master Doctor Martin Luther Upon the Epistle of S. Paul to the Galathians*), with the imprimatur of "Edwinnus," Bishop Sandys, and a commendation "To All Afflicted Consciences Which Grone for Salvation, and wrastle under the Crosse for

the Kingdome of Christ." In this edition the Reader is assured in the foreword that "the Author felt what he spake and had experience of what he wrote." Some reminiscence of this line we seem to get in Bunyan's allusion to the book: "I did greatly long to see some ancient godly man's experience . . . for those who had writ in our days, I thought, but I desire them now to pardon me, that they had writ only that which others felt."

Notably and supremely, it was the evangelical doctrine of Justification by Faith that ministered at this time to Bunyan's condition; which doctrine, here as everywhere, Luther sets himself to unfold. As we know, he does so with such boldness of emphasis and such audacity of comparison and contrast that even a reader more settled in mind than Bunyan might here and there have stumbled. But Bunyan had no difficulty: "I found my condition so largely and profoundly handled as if his book had been written out of my heart."

The universal plague of the world, as Luther has it, is man's good opinion of his own righteousness and his willingness to justify himself in his own eyes by merit of his own performances; and in this matter the Turk and the charterhouse monk and the school divine are all apt to think the same. It is all a religion of Law and merit, and even Christ Himself is painted out in the colour of a new lawgiver and exactor. But the Gospel which bringeth the Holy Ghost is otherwise.

The Gospel commandeth us to look not to our own perfections but to Christ our Righteousness. The Gospel shows us Christ not as a Law, nor a Moses, nor an Exactor, but as a Giver of grace, "nothing else but infinite mercy and goodness." Yet, indeed, says Luther, it is hard to trust Him, for the doctrine of Law and merit has entered as oil into our bones. We will look everywhere for evidence of our justification but to Christ. "Brother, thou desirest to have a sensible feeling of God's favour as thou hast of thine own sinne." Well, but this will not do. "Faith sheweth unto me Christ in whom I trust" over against this feeling of sin.

Let us, says Luther, arm ourselves with such sentences of Holy Scripture as, that Christ *gave Himself for our sins* (Gal. i. 4), that we may be able to answer the devil in this sort: "'Because thou saiest I am a sinner, therefore will I be righteous and saved.' 'Nay' (saith the devill) 'thou shalt be damned.' 'No' (say I) 'for I fly unto Christ *who hath given himselfe for my sins*. Therefore, Satan, thou shalt not prevaile against me in that thou goest about to terrifie me in setting forth the greatness of my sins, and so to bring me into heavines, distrust, despaire, hatred, contempt and blaspheming of God. Yea rather, in that thou sayest I am a sinner, thou givest me armour and weapon against thyself, that with thine owne Sword I may cut thy throat, and tread thee under my feet: for Christ died for sinners. Moreover, thou thyselfe preachest unto

me the glory of God. For thou puttest me in mind of God's fatherly love towards me, wretched and damned.' . . . Who so knoweth this one point of cunning well shall easily avoid all the engines and snares of the devill. . . . But the man that tormenteth himself with his own cogitations, thinking either to helpe himselfe by his own strength and policie, or to tarry the time till his conscience may be quieted, falleth into Satan's snares and miserably afflicteth himselfe, and at length is overcome . . . for the devill will never cease to accuse his conscience." (Chap i, fol. 21.)

To Bunyan all this was a strong and saving corrective for his tortured, inward-turning mind. Froude, seeking to distinguish between the essential and extraneous elements in Bunyan's new experience, finds the divine authority of conscience to have been the fructifying, fundamental principle. Yet perhaps the authority of conscience would have been the death of Bunyan if no other principle had intervened. Up to now Christ Himself had been to him little more than an apotheosis of Conscience. On that Sabbath afternoon in the midst of his forbidden sport he had beheld Him looking down upon him "as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if he did severely threaten me." Between himself and this Christ Bunyan had felt he had need of another mediator, and in those earlier days it would have been in his heart to feel that Holy Church and holy duties, priests, clerks, and sacraments were

themselves the desired go-between, only in his own case he thought matters past all remedy. Christ, in very truth, had come to be, to Bunyan, what the perfect Law had been to Paul, shutting him up to a sense of hopeless condemnation ; and all the while that he was trying to force himself into such heart-freedom as he found in Gifford and the choicest of his flock, he was only discovering his helplessness afresh.

Luther broke the tyranny of this conception. Bunyan came to see at last that Christ had mediated to him far more than a perfect rule and example, even grace, atonement and the gift of eternal life. Thus he understood that the joy of heart which belonged to Gifford's saints, and which made them seem as if they always sat in the sun, had for its open secret not self-sufficiency but the sufficiency of Christ. He was the glory above their heads. "I saw that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better," but Jesus Christ Himself. "Now I could look from myself to him."

Thus Bunyan must let fall before all men that he does prefer Martin Luther upon the Galatians, excepting the Holy Bible, before all the books that ever he has seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience : for next to the Bible it was Martin Luther's book that taught him how the secret of his peace lay not in his own heart but in the heart of God.

Moreover, we may take it that there was in particular another word in Luther's book upon

which Bunyan's mind was to fasten and which, in due time, he was to exhibit in his own way of life. When, says Luther, I have Christ's imputed righteousness reigning in my heart, I descend upon the earth as fruitful rain—the rain (as we are to understand him) which, out of its heavenly abundance, blesseth both the just and the unjust. For "whosoever he be that is assuredly persuaded that Christ is his righteousness doth not only chearfully and gladly worke well in his vocation but also submitteth himself through love to the Magistrate and to their laws, yea, though they be severe, sharp and cruell, and (if necessity do arise) to all manner of burdens . . . because he knoweth that this is the will of God, and that this obedience pleaseth him."

(5)

It was not for nothing that Bunyan, in his Dream, put the Valley of the Shadow not at the beginning of the pilgrimage but well on in the journey. It was so in his own experience. So that with the breaking of the new light and the riddance of his burden at the Cross his sorrows were by no means at an end. Yet the point is that with his mind still haunted by uncouth terrors and fantasies he had nevertheless passed into that region in which religion was become not simply a discipline but a romance. It was with him, when he first beheld the lineaments of Divine Grace, as it was with Dante when he first looked upon Beatrice : it was the beginning of a new life.

And as to all this we must seek, for our classic passage, beyond the pages of *Grace Abounding* to the relation he gives us in his *Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded.* He must tell us that when it pleased God to instruct his soul He showed him so clearly the greatness and abominableness of his sins that he thought the very clouds above his head were charged with the divine wrath and ready to rain fire upon him. "But at the last, as I may say, when the set time was come, the Lord, just before the men called Quakers came into the country, did set me down so blessedly in the truth of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, that . . . I did see so evidently [His life and death, resurrection and ascension], even as if I had stood by when He was in the world. . . . I having such a change as this upon my soul, it made me wonder . . . at the great alteration that was in my spirit—for the Lord did also very gloriously give me in his precious Word to back the discovery of the Son of God unto me, so that I can say through grace, it was according to the Scriptures. . . . [Yea,] with more fresh incomes of the Lord Jesus and the power of the blood of his cross upon my soul . . . I saw, through grace, that it was the blood shed on Mount Calvary that did save and redeem sinners, as clearly and as really with the eyes of my soul as ever, methought, I had seen a penny loaf bought with a penny; which things then discovered had such operation upon my soul that I do hope they did sweetly season every faculty thereof."

Here we have Bunyan alike in his mysticism and his literalism, in his visualizing imagination and his insistence upon the check of the written Word, in his vivid experience and his reliance upon an objective, historical Gospel and upon a faith transcending experience. Above all he must witness to the Atonement. For with all his reliance upon the inspired Scriptures and all his reverence for the holy Apostles he must let us understand that in this matter he can say, no less than St. Peter, that he is here a veritable eye-witness and soul-witness of the Divine Majesty, even of the grace and power of the Cross. "Sometimes I have been so loaden with my sins that I could not tell where to rest nor what to do; yea, at such times I thought it would have taken away my senses; yet at that time God through grace hath all of a sudden so effectually applied the blood that was spilt at Mount Calvary out of the side of Jesus unto my poor, wounded, guilty conscience that presently I have found such a sweet, solid, sober, heart-comforting peace that it has made me as if [my terror] . . . had not been."

This is Bunyan in his innermost self-disclosure —too profound, too sacred, too vital to be idly confused with the extraneous details and framework of seventeenth-century orthodoxy; and however far we may now be removed from his position upon this or that particular doctrine, we have to reckon with this central testimony as something *gravid*, vital, fundamental to his new life.

"The seeing eye, the feeling sense,
The mystic joys of penitence,
The guiltless shame, the sweet distress,
Th' unutterable tenderness;
The genuine, meek humility,
The wonder, 'Why such love to me?'"

This it is which makes him, with all his limitations and prejudices, the romanticist of Puritanism, discloses to him his true vocation, fires him with the supreme passion. For he is careful to tell us that it was at this time, while he was put into a muse at the happy alteration in his spirit, that it seemed to him a Voice spake within his heart: "*I have set thee down on purpose, for I have something more than ordinary for thee to do.*" Thus, too, it was the beginning of his impulse toward authorship. It came to him, as we recall, on that Sabbath in early spring when he would fain have preached of the love of God to the very crows on the ploughed land at his feet. "So as I was a going home these words came again into my thoughts and began to kindle in my spirit—'Thou art my love, thou art my love'—twenty times together; and still as they ran thus in my mind they waxed stronger and stronger. . . . Wherefore I said in my soul with much gladness, '*Well, I would I had a pen and ink here, I would write this down before I go any further!*'"

Above all, it is to this experience that we must trace his mystical and ardent love for Christ. On this theme there is in his testimony a note of rapture which carries us back to the writings of

the mediaeval saints. At times, indeed, he uses language that would even be cloying if we could forget the rugged and masculine heartiness of the man who is speaking. He speaks of the "sweet pains" of love for Christ. To be *love-sick* for Him is a sickness he wishes were "more epidemical." "Die of this disease I would gladly do; it is better than life itself." "Of all tears they are the best that are made by the blood of Christ; and of all joy that is the sweetest that is mixed with mourning over Christ. Oh! it is a goodly thing to be on our knees with Christ in our arms before God. I hope I know something of these things."

The supreme illumination and fire-baptism were yet to come, but here already was the faith pontifical which bridged for him the chasm between despair and hope:—no mere ecclesiastical toll-bridge this, nor drawbridge over which liveried envoys should pass to him with certified indulgences, but a lovers' bridge, in very truth, and sacred trysting-place of the soul.

Yet, withal, he was still shaken and distrait and subject to the old distempers; still apt at times to wander into forlorn wastes of doubt and fear. He was not yet within sight of those wider horizons which he was presently to scan through the grated casements of Bedford gaol.

(6)

A word may be added as to Bunyan's home-life during these five years of conflict. No doubt it

would be illuminating if we had the memoirs of Bunyan's wife to set alongside his own. But once and again, as if inadvertently, he lifts the veil enough for us to see that there was no estrangement of sympathy and affection. But, to adapt what Mr. Chesterton has somewhere said of Cobbett's wife, Bunyan's first wife remains in the background of her husband's story in a not unpathetic silence; soon in her case to deepen into a silence more complete and final.

For some time about 1655 the Bunyans changed their habitation for a cottage in Bedford town, and there, within a year or so, Mistress Bunyan, having moved thus dimly in the shadowy background, fades out of the picture altogether. Bunyan was left a widower with his blind child Mary to care for, and three other little ones.

"It was my mercy," he wrote, "to light upon" such a wife: a frugal Puritan wreath, in which, however, that word *mercy* remains an unfaded and pleasant flower. It was the name which he chose later for the "sweet heart" who betook her to a pilgrim's life with Christiana. "I cannot tell," says Mercy, "of visions and dreams, as my friend Christiana can, nor know I what it is to mourn" for the refusing of early counsel. She had set out, it seems, for love's sake. "Thou art a Ruth," says Interpreter; for Ruth went on pilgrimage for love.

Of Bunyan's own Mercy we may be sure that she lived and died with no dreams of worldly fame. It could never have occurred to her to

suppose that her good man would be held in everlasting remembrance, his face more familiar to the England of distant generations than the portraits of the Stuart kings. It never crossed her mind that as the partner of his life through those years of supreme crisis, she had achieved a title which would outlast the titles of the great folks to whom she would meekly curtsy as their coach-wheels ploughed the dust of the Bedford roads. It sufficed for her that she loved the man of her choice and encouraged him in the good life. So far as she was able she suffered with him. We may believe that in many ways she suffered for him. Perhaps in a sense not too fanciful the monument of his imperishable fame rests upon the devotion and unrecorded sacrifices of this village girl.

THERE is a seventeenth-century etching which pictures Bunyan, before his first imprisonment, preaching in front of the Mote Hall, Bedford. The execution is rude enough, but the general suggestion is vivid. Bunyan has gathered around him a crowd of a hundred or two, and stands above them, erect and commanding. His countenance is stern and leonine, his bare head shows a mane-like mass of hair, his right arm is flung out in sweeping gesture. It is not the dreamer or poet-preacher that we have here, but the fiery gospeller crying out against men's sins. And the unknown artist lets us see that the exhorter has his hearers under his spell.

It appears to have been in the year 1655—the year of Gifford's death—that Bunyan began to preach. He was urged to this, he tells us, by "some of the most able among the saints," and though the thought of preaching abashed him, and it was some time before he could come at it in a public way, he nevertheless found a "secret pricking forward" in his mind, and it came to him that "the Holy Ghost never intended that

men who have gifts and abilities should bury them in the earth." It was not his way then or afterward to make pretence of a humble ignorance of his powers.

As to his preaching, he is at some pains to show that he was never an irresponsible free-lance. He had behind him from the first the authority of Gifford's society, which, under the Cromwellian settlement, had been brought within the national Church. "Wherefore, at last, being still desired by the church, after some solemn prayer to the Lord, with fasting, I was more particularly called forth and appointed to a more ordinary and public preaching of the Word."

(1)

This was about the time when "the men called Quakers came into the country," and Bunyan first came into prominence as an anti-Quaker controversialist. Strange enough it must seem to us now, that no more convinced opponent ever set himself against George Fox and his way than the future author of *Pilgrim's Progress*. To the controversy itself most biographers have been content to give a passing and deploring allusion; yet it has some significance as showing us the temper of Bunyan's mind at this period.

It is clear to us to-day, though nothing was less clear to Bunyan, that he himself was half-way to being a Quaker. He, like Fox, had the mystic's instinct for the spiritual word, the mystic's dependence upon the savour of his own spirit, and

something of the mystic's independence of external forms and ordinances. The man who could write, as Bunyan did, "as touching shadowish and figurative ordinances," that he counted them "not the fundamentals of our Christianity, nor grounds or rule to communion," who could differentiate between the outer and inner word as between shell and kernel ("the notion is the shell, the power is the kernel"), and who knew how to test for truth with the litmus of his own spirit ("only by the distaste that" certain dubious doctrines "gave unto my spirit I felt there was something in me that refused to embrace them")—such a man had much in common with Fox and his followers. And, for that matter, Bunyan's simplicity of dress and manner, his disrelish for all luxury, his leaning to passive resistance, and even his way of referring to days and months by numbers, all pointed toward Quakerism.

Yet when, in 1656, and following Fox's personal itinerary in the county, a few Quaker apostles came to Bedford and opened their testimony at the Market Cross, Bunyan fell foul of them at once. With Gifford's successor (John Burton) and others, he engaged them in acrimonious debate in the market-place, in St. Paul's Church and elsewhere, and seems to have drawn much of the fire.

It was a furious affair on both sides, full of flame and brimstone. In fairness to Bunyan it should be remembered that England, never more than at this time, was plagued and doddered with

strange factions—Seekers, Familists, antinomian Ranters, militant Theocratists, Millennarians; and if Bunyan could not get it out of his head that Fox's doctrine was only a more seductive variation of the antinomian mysticism of the Ranters he was not alone in his prejudice. "The Quakers," wrote Baxter, "were but the Ranters turned from horrid profaneness . . . to a life of extreme austerity." Nor were the Quakers at this early period above fair suspicion of fanatical excess. There was the case of James Naylor, who had ridden one rainy autumn day through the streets of Bristol in very strange messianic fashion, followed by a drab procession of devotees, all shouting their Hosannas. "James," says Fox, "had run out into imaginations." This was the year before the Bedford debates. The pure springs of Quakerism had not yet cleansed their channel.

In any case, what we find in Bunyan in this controversy, and continue to observe in him, underpinning all his mysticism and imagination, is a certain English solidity and conservatism. If he was unconsciously five-tenths Quaker he was, as to the other five-tenths very much of a Tory, with a Tory's instinctive antipathy for anything approaching bizarre innovation. "I am one of the old fashion sort," he tells us; and we know a man by that phrase. To him the Quakers were, in his own words, "a new upstart sect," and he disliked their departure from tradition. Simplicity he would have, but an

extravagance of simplicity would not do. Thus the Quaker peculiarities of speech, their war upon hatbands and against the doffing of hats, and their new fashion of water-drinking were not for him.

"Now, 1656," he declares, "Quakers are changed to the laws of the world. Now they must wear no hatbands; now they must live with bread and water . . . now they must not speak except their spirit moves them"—and so on in very obstinate and irate fashion, to the end that he must express astonishment that either the earth does not swallow them up or the Devil does not fetch them away alive.

Perhaps, also, the truth is that Bunyan was alarmed for himself. He was mystic enough to feel the attraction of the Quaker testimony; and that he felt it we may infer from the vehemence of his antagonism. There was always with him, though he phrased it differently, the Quaker reference to the inner light; but it was his instinct to hold his mystical and visionary tendencies in close tether to a corrective authority. For so suggestible a nature, a mind so plagued with "voices" and impulses, there was, apart from this, no safety from the wildest delusions. He too readily suspected the new movement of being weak on this side, of "running out into imaginations" and in some subtle way substituting for the Christ of history a dream-Christ of cogitation and fantasy. It was this that led him to speak of Christ, as he so often does, as "the Man"—as distinct, that is, from an inner principle or

idealization. "Here is my LIFE, namely, the birth of this Man, the righteousness of this Man, the blood of this Man, the death and resurrection of this Man, the ascension and intercession of this Man for me." And yet he is careful not to leave the statement there, as if there were no subjective emphasis at all: "I say here is my LIFE, if I see this by faith without me, through the operation of the Spirit within me."

The controversy served to clear his own mind, and its notable result was that it pricked him on to authorship. To his first book (1656) Burton contributes a commendation. He has had experience, he testifies, of Bunyan's soundness, godly conversation and ability to preach: "This man is not chosen out of an earthly, but out of the heavenly university" and has already taken "heavenly degrees." To the literary duel that followed between Bunyan and Quaker Edward Burrough there is no need to turn; the two men were young in years and in the faith (Burrough was twenty-three, with only six years between him and his martyr-death; Bunyan was twenty-eight), and hurled their treatises at each other as bolts and fireballs. But we turn again to that first volume, very violent and sulphurous, with its title that rumbles and blares and detonates like a half-barbaric noise of brass ordnance, drums and tom-toms: "SOME GOSPEL TRUTHS OPENED According to the Scriptures; Or, The Divine and Human Nature of Christ Jesus; His Coming into the World; His Righteousness, Death, Resur-

rection, Ascension, Intercession, and Second Coming to Judgment, Plainly Demonstrated and Proved. And also Answers to several Questions, with profitable Directions to stand fast in the Doctrine of Jesus the Son of MARY, against the blustering Storms of the Devil's Temptations, which do at this Day, like so many Scorpions, break loose from the bottomless Pit, to bite and torment those that have not tasted the Virtue of Jesus, by the Revelation of the Spirit of God. Published for the good of God's chosen ones, by that unworthy servant of CHRIST, JOHN BUNYAN, of BEDFORD, By the grace of GOD, preacher of the GOSPEL of his dear SON."

(2)

Perhaps the thing to be noted is, that at this time, for all his zeal and vigour of mind, Bunyan was very much of a Philistine. His preaching was after the manner of the hot gospelling of the day, raucous and guttural, a fiery message pounded out with coarse violence of language and metaphor; and perhaps his appearance was in keeping with his rôle.

A contemporary describes him as tall, ruddy and strong-boned, "wearing his hair on his upper lip after the old British fashion," and appearing in countenance to be "of a stern and rough temper." Of his countenance another contemporary writes, "it did strike something of awe into them that had nothing of the fear of God," a description which calls up Browning's vision of him:

"His brown hair burst apart, his eyes were suns to see."

Bunyan himself tells us that about this time some of his traducers put it about that he was a highwayman—preaching the Gospel, it seems, by day, and by night playing the bold brigand on the road. There were other inventions, as that he was a libertine living like a Turk, or a Jesuit risking his neck in the pay of the Pope; but the highwayman story had this in its favour, that to some extent Bunyan looked the part. In a very real sense he bore the marks of a desperado:

> "his face
> Deep scars of thunder had intrencht."

A man who for long years had felt himself under warrant and condemnation of a Law more dread than any earthly code, who had battled to the death with the powers of darkness, and faced not simply the gallows but the Bottomless Pit—such a man may well have emerged with something of the mien and bearing of those who live by desperate hazards.

And he was still living dangerously. He tells us that guilt and terror continued to oppress him. "I preached what I felt, what I smartingly did feel. . . . I went myself in chains to preach to them in chains, and carried that fire in my own conscience that I persuaded them to beware of." Those who turn to the treatises that echo his earliest preaching (for example, his *Sighs from Hell, or Groans of a Damned Soul*: 1658) will learn to wonder how the immortal Dream could ever have issued from a brain which here seems a red-hot cauldron of seething furies. Here we have devils

"screeching and howling," sinners "lying and frying," torments worse than red-hot spits and scalding lead, vengeance descending "not by drops but by whole showers, thunder, thunder, upon body and soul"—a riot of Dantesque horrors shorn of all Dantesque dignity of conception.

"Set the case you should take a man, and tie him to a stake, and with red-hot pinchers, pinch off his flesh by little pieces for two or three years together, and at last, when the poor man cries out for ease and help, the tormentors answer, Nay, but beside all this, you must be handled worse. We will serve you thus these twenty years together, and after that we will fill your mangled body full of scalding lead, or run you through with a red-hot spit; would not this be lamentable? Yet this is but a flea-biting to the sorrow of those that go to hell. . . . There they shall be ever whining, pining, weeping, mourning, ever tormented without ease; and yet never dissolved into nothing. If the biggest devil in hell might pull thee all to pieces, and rend thee small as dust, and dissolve thee into nothing, thou wouldst count this a mercy. But here thou mayst lie and fry, scorch and broil, and burn for ever" (*Sighs from Hell*, Offor's Edn., Vol. III, pp. 693–4).

This is Bunyan at his earliest and his worst.

It is impossible to let this pass without noting in advance how different is the emphasis of his later preaching. The appeal to fear is still active, but it is spiritualized. Mere animal terror, he says, is of no avail. "Suppose thou wast a minister, and wast sent from God with a whip whose cords were made of the flames of hell, thou mightest lash long enough before thou wouldist so much as

drive [into the Kingdom] one man that abides without desires to God . . . by that thy so sore whip" (*The Desires of the Righteous Granted*). Sin, not hell, becomes the thing most dreadful: "Sin is worse than the devil" (*The Saint's Knowledge of Christ's Love*). "Sin, as sin, is the sting and the hell of hells" (*The Greatness of the Soul*); and while he concedes to Puritan orthodoxy the idea of physical suffering, yet "the soul must be the burden bearer." It is Divine Grace that is the most awesome thing in the world. "There is nothing in heaven or earth that can so AWE the heart as the grace of God. It is that which makes a man tremble; it is that which makes a man bow and bend and break to pieces. Nothing has that majesty and commanding greatness in and upon the hearts of the sons of men as the grace of God" (*The Water of Life*). And as for the final Judgment, it shall bear no appearance of arbitrariness, but will follow a manifest and inevitable outworking of reason and truth: "I have often thought of the day of judgment, and I believe it will be managed with that sweetness, with that equitableness, with that excellent righteousness" that the very reprobate themselves shall acknowledge there is "every reason in the world" that they should be so dealt with (*The Jerusalem Sinner Saved*).

Moreover, even in these earlier and cruder years his preaching matured with his deepening experience. For the first two years, he tells us, it was mainly a "crying out against men's sins

and their fearful state because of them," but soon "the Lord came in upon my soul with some staid peace and comfort through Christ . . . wherefore now I altered in my preaching, for still I preached what I saw and felt. . . . After this, God let me into something of the mystery of union with Christ; wherefore that I discovered and showed to them also." Grace and common sense kept him clear, in the main, of unedifying controversies. "I never cared to meddle with things that were controverted and in dispute amongst the saints. . . . I should let them alone, because I saw they engendered strife, and because that they, neither in doing nor in leaving undone, did commend us to God to be his. Besides, I saw my work before me did run in another channel, even to carry an awakening word; to that therefore did I stick and adhere."

His spirit "leaned most after converting work," and from the first he found success. "I at first could not believe that God should speak by me to the heart of any man . . . yet those who thus were touched would love me and have a peculiar respect for me." Withal he was temperamental and highly strung, full of fears, as the hour for preaching approached, that he would "not be able to speak sense," and at times feeling his legs hardly able to support him up the pulpit stairs. He appears to have used notes and extemporized from them with natural fluency of utterance, but there were times when, as he says, he felt as if his head were "in a bag."

His fame was soon blazed abroad. The people flocked to hear him, he tells us, "by hundreds, and that from all parts." Calls for his services reached him from far and near, and he was able to deliver his message not in barns and conventicles only but, here and there, from the pulpits of parish churches.

He did not have it all his own way. He complains of the "grinning countenances" of his consistent critics, the Quakers, who found the literalism of some of his expositions not at all to their minds; and there were others. In Toft, Cambridgeshire, for example, he had his celebrated bout with the Rev. Dr. Smith, rector of Gawcal, lecturer at Christ's College, professor of Arabic, and much else; and somewhere on the road to Cambridge he fell in with the university scholar who demanded of him how he, not knowing the Scriptures in the original, dared put himself forward to preach. Bunyan wished to know if the scholar possessed the actual originals. No, he did not, but he had access to what he believed to be true copies. "And I," says Bunyan, "believe the English Bible to be a true copy also."

Offor cites a pleasanter story of another Cambridge scholar:

"'Being to preach in a church in a country village (before the restoration of King Charles) in Cambridgeshire, and the people being gathered together in the church-yard, a Cambridge scholar, and none of the soberest of 'em neither, inquired what the meaning of that concourse of people was, it being upon the week day,

and being told that one Bunyan, a tinker, was to preach there, he gave a boy twopence to hold his horse, saying he was resolved to hear the tinker prate; and so went into the church to hear him. But God met with him there by his ministry, so that he came out much changed, and would, by his good-will, hear none but the tinker for a long time after, he himself becoming a very eminent preacher in that county afterwards'" (Offor's *Bunyan*, Vol. III, p. lii).

Such are the glimpses we get of him in those days—uncouth enough, but very earnest, hearty and powerful, and full of a burly and thunderous eloquence. Once, under the Commonwealth, he seems to have been indicted (though nothing came of it) as an irregular preacher, and the House of Lords archives still show a petition from the scandalized parishioners of Yelden against their rector (William Dell) "since upon Christmas Day last, one Bunyon of Bedford, a tinker, was countenanced and suffered to speak in his pulpit."

(3)

Events were now moving toward a crisis. About the time when Bunyan was taking to himself a second wife, George Fox, walking in the neighbourhood of Hampton Court, felt that "waft of death" go forth against Cromwell. "I met him riding into Hampton Court Park, and before I came to him, as he rode at the head of his life-guard, I saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him; and when I came to him he looked like a dead man."

Presently, as it seems, that mystic death-blast

becomes an actual windstorm and strange tempest, sweeping through England like an earthbound spirit in haste to be gone; in which tempest Cromwell's own spirit takes its flight. As we know, what Evelyn, with his honest but prejudiced eyes, surveyed as the joyfullest funeral he ever saw, was not so much the funeral of Cromwell as of the Puritan Commonwealth. It passes in full pageant with "pendants and guidons and imperial banners," "none crying but the dogs," which the soldiers, "drinking and taking tobacco" in the streets as they go, hoot out of the way "with a barbarous noise"—the Puritan Commonwealth itself, could men but see it, lying there on that velvet bed of state.

Within a week of that Christmas day when Bunyan so scandalized the strict churchmen of Yelden, Monk was in Town, ready with his Rump Parliament, while Charles was at Breda, ready to set sail for Dover. Baxter, who "detested ministers meddling in State matters," but whose eager mind was a hot spring in constant activity, had brought out his *Holy Commonwealth*, arguing for a limited monarchy, and Charles, "at Our Court at Breda," had declared "a liberty to tender consciences and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the Kingdom."

Within six months of Charles' return, Bunyan was beginning the first term of his twelve years' imprisonment.

If we need a picture to suggest the new background and setting of Bunyan's England at this time, we have our choice in the descriptions which have come down to us of Charles' return.

Pepys was on board the royal brigantine which conveyed the King and the new era from Breda to Dover. He heard the continuous thunder of loyalist gunpowder and beheld the Dover cliffs crowned with welcoming multitudes. Monk was on the beach waiting to greet his Prince with all imaginable love; the Mayor of Dover was behind him with "a very rich Bible," to be presented as the first gift and token of English loyalty. His Majesty, having breakfasted betimes (on peas and pork and boiled beef, as the observant Pepys records), showed himself amiable, handsome and princely. He greeted Monk with cordiality and graciously accepted the Bible as "the thing that I love above all things in the world." There were shouting and joy, says Pepys, and much glad weeping,—"beyond imagination."

We have to leave Pepys behind at Dover,

but Evelyn, well recovered of his double tertian, is awaiting us in London, even more rejoiced than at the Protector's funeral. He sees the streets carpeted with May flowers and hung with tapestries; fountains everywhere in play, the water turned into wine; mayors and aldermen and their companies in appropriate splendour; windows and balconies "well set with ladies"; great lords and their dames "clad in silver, gold and velvet." Somewhere in the crowd, darting in and out through the human forest (but Evelyn has no eyes for her yet), is a ten-year-old orange-girl named Nell Gwynn. Diarist Rugge comes in to colour the picture further with a great array of London maidens clad in "white waistcoats and crimson petticoats and other ornaments of triumph": all set off with rainbow effects against the dun and turgid floods of common humanity that deluge the streets. Charles, having made royal progress from Dover as "through an interminable fair," enters the City with "a triumph of about 20,000 horse and foot, all brandishing their swords and shouting," the people also shouting, and in the firmament withal, as if the very heavens had come joyfully down, a brave clash and uproar of multitudinous bells.

Thus the "mad, roaring time" was begun. In Bedford, too, there was great rejoicing. Probably a loyal candle or two burned in Bunyan's window that night. As we have said, within six months he was a prisoner in Bedford county gaol.

(I)

Here we are introduced to the one group of scenes in Bunyan's career which may fairly be called dramatic. The real, tremendous drama of his life, being staged in the invisible, defies representation. A man moping through the fields, or sitting disconsolate on a settle in the street, or haranguing a crowd in a barn, does not easily suggest the dramatic idea—unless, that is to say, we are to be allowed mediaeval license and make free play with foul fiends and holy angels, unless, indeed, we put God and the Devil on the stage. But here, in the events leading up to Bunyan's imprisonment, the dramatic motive does embody itself, flinging into pictorial expression something of the strange antagonisms of the times.

First of all, however, a word should be said in advance concerning his imprisonment itself.

Altogether, Bunyan appears to have served from November, 1660, to May, 1672, and again for some six months ending in 1676. We may take it that the first term was served in the county prison in Silver Street, the second in the town lock-up on the Bridge.[1]

As to the motives behind his first arrest, the lust of the flesh against the spirit may have been active enough in the policy of the Restoration era, but the early reaction which swept Bunyan into gaol in 1660 is hardly to be identified with the blind vindictiveness of the later persecutions. So

[1] I am indebted to Dr. Whitley for indicating a correction of Dr. Brown's theory of a release during the Plague year. See *Trans. Baptist Hist. Scty.* VI. 5.

far as the religious question was concerned, the cardinal error of the Restoration government centred in its determination to outlaw every form of faith outside the Episcopacy—" unwilling," in Brownrig's phrase, " to part with a rag of the surplice to save the nation from a conflagration." But in 1660 the clerical extremists were not yet in the saddle and the chief weapons of persecution were yet to be forged. On the other hand, there was much to excuse a certain measure of repression. The late wars and the subsequent commotions had released into activity within the State many disruptive forces, not least among them the nondescript, fanatical exhorters who corrupted the popular mind with every form of zealotry and superstition. Evelyn, a prejudiced witness, it is true, has left us a picture of this type of preacher. " Going this day to our Church," before the Restoration, " I was surpriz'd to see a tradesman, a mechanic, step up ; I was resolv'd yet to stay and see what he would make of it. His text was from 2 Sam. ch. xxiii. v. 20. 'And Benaiah went downe also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in the time of snow' ; the purport was, that no danger was to be thought difficult when God call'd for shedding of blood, inferring that now the Saints were call'd to destroy temporal governments, with such feculent stuff ; so dangerous a crisis were things growne to." At the time of Bunyan's arrest Venner was plotting for a second time to proclaim the Reign of Christ by an armed *coup d'état.*

It is not difficult to understand that Bunyan, as an unlicensed preacher-mechanic, fell under suspicion of belonging to this general class of irresponsible exhorters, and he himself tells us that the local authorities seemed to have suspected that the meeting at which he was taken was an armed affair. In either instance the suspicion was unfounded, but it was at least as easy for the authorities to confuse Bunyan with the seditious type of gospeller as for Bunyan to confuse the Quakers with the Ranters.

Withal he was committed with some reluctance. He was admonished, even entreated. If only he would "leave off his preaching" he should go free. No doubt it was an impossible condition for a man of Bunyan's conscience and temper, but it was precisely what Cromwell had pressed upon George Fox, cast into Launceston gaol during the Commonwealth. He "offered us," says Fox, "our liberty if we would say 'we would go home and preach no more'" (*Fox's Journal*: Anno 1656). As Froude says, Bunyan virtually committed himself. Under the Statute his "offence," such as it was, was clear, and he aggravated it by announcing that he would immediately repeat it if he were released. The full statutory penalties were not imposed. They included banishment, failing submission after three months' confinement. As we know, the banishment clause was not enforced; instead, Bunyan was indefinitely detained. It was an illegal evasion, but it was an illegality rather more merciful than the strict enforcement of the law.

As for his imprisonment itself, at its mildest, detention in a seventeenth-century gaol was a vile experience; but it is also true that for offenders of Bunyan's class it involved far less of penal restraint than would be the case to-day. Thus Macaulay's description of Bunyan's "lying patiently in a dungeon" year after year is rhetorical. We may follow the best-informed of Bunyan's modern biographers in believing that he was never dungeoned with the common felons but confined in roomier quarters on the upper floor. We know that he was free to receive his family and friends, free to conduct worship and preach within the prison precincts, and able to work for his family's support and write his numerous books.

Moreover his detention was not always of the strictest. Between the autumn and spring following his arrest, while his case was still pending, he was allowed to "visit the people of God," travelling even as far as London. He took advantage of his freedom to follow his "wonted course of preaching," and perhaps on that account found his liberties curtailed. Still there were times when discipline relaxed, and the sight of his familiar figure on the Bedford streets was not altogether unknown. So long as ruling opinion would allow, the prison authorities seemed willing enough to look at these liberties "through their fingers"; thus in the records of the Bedford Meeting Bunyan's name appears at intervals not simply among those present at the sessions of the

society but as one who was, now and again, still able to fulfil the visiting duties of a church officer. "We desire brother Bunyan and brother John ffenne to go again to [admonish] sister Pecock" (1661). "Brother Bunyan and brother Cooper were appointed to go to brother Coventon to admonish him" (1668). "The Church thought good to send brother John Bunyan and brother John Whiteman once more to admonish" brother Nelson ("openly and profanely bishopt after the Antichristian order"), also brothers Coventon, Deane and others (1669).[1] In the first six years of his imprisonment Bunyan was able to write and publish nine works in prose and verse, including *Grace Abounding*, *Christian Behaviour* and *The Holy City*.

When all is said, the fact remains that he was cast into prison and held there without proper legal warrant for twelve years for no other crime than failure to conform to the Episcopacy. Moreover, his victimization witnessed to the fatal imbecility of persecuting governments. There were crazed and dangerous zealots a plenty, who might have been proceeded against with a fair justification, but the man to be pitched upon by the county authorities was this plain evangelist, blameless in reputation, loyalist by conviction,

[1] Brother Coventon is reported "through mercy hopefully recovering" from his backslidings; Brother Deane, "not sensible as yet, but desiring the prayers and patience of the Church"—later, however, with Brother Nelson, "cut off and cast out."

with a flame in his soul that made Bedford gaol a lantern whereof he was the light, shining out significantly in flashes and signals observed of all England. What Bunyan, thus victimized, did in effect was to challenge the authorities, local and national, in this whole matter. He challenged them, in his own expression, by "lying down and seeing what they could do unto" him. It was an unequal contest, for the odds, after all, were with Bunyan.

(2)

Bunyan, then, was arrested on a November evening in 1660, while he was conducting worship in a farmhouse at Lower Samsell, near Harlington. Before his arrival local friends had got wind of it that a warrant was out against him, and his host was for calling the meeting off and getting him away. What we observe is, that, when Bunyan arrives, the host and his qualms, and all qualmy sympathizers, are quickly set aside. Bunyan strides into the room and takes command at once. "I said, 'No, by no means; I will not stir, neither will I have the meeting dismissed for this. Come, be of good cheer! let us not be daunted. Our cause is good.'"

He recalls that at this point, there being still some time before the hour of meeting, he left the company and walked out alone into the close. It was as if he were a soldier once more, and had we seen him as he took his paces up and down the enclosure we might have noted as much, now and again, in his gait and bearing. For his thoughts

came to him armed and in military livery. He tells us that it was made clear to him that God in His mercy was summoning him to " go upon the forlorn hope in this country " and he durst not flinch from it. " I had showed myself hearty and courageous in my preaching, and had, blessed be grace, made it my business to encourage others. Therefore, thought I, if I should now run, and make an escape, it will be of a very ill savour in the country. For what will my weak and newly converted brethren think of it, but that I was not so strong in deed as I was in word ? Also I feared that if I should run, now there was a warrant out for me, I might by so doing make them afraid to stand, when great words only should be spoken to them."

So he returns to the house " with a full resolution " and begins the meeting, determined " to see the utmost of what they could say or do unto me." The constable and the Justice's man duly break in upon them and " would not be quiet till they had me away " ; but not before Bunyan, in their presence, had got out " some few words of counsel and encouragement." No one need be disheartened. It was " a mercy to suffer upon so good account " and far " better to be the persecuted than the persecutors." Thus we catch sight of him, erect and resolute, striding across the fields between Law and Order, on the way to his long imprisonment.

Following this we have pictures enough. We behold him, for example, in Mr. Justice Wingate's

hall, in Harlington House, the constable in charge of him and a solitary friend at his side. Wingate figures, perhaps, as the average, well-fed bucolic squire of the period, and he would know why on earth Bunyan could not content himself with his tinkering. He was "in a chafe," says Bunyan, and declared he would "break the neck of our meetings." It would have irked him to have looked into the future and seen three of his own grandchildren, and other of his kinsfolk, staunch upholders of the Bunyan tradition and members of his church,—their dust mingling at last with that of the tinker's children and grandchildren in the little burial-ground of the Bedford Meeting. (See Dr. John Brown's *Life of Bunyan*, chap. vii.)

When Wingate withdraws to make out Bunyan's *mittimus*, the squire's father-in-law comes in—Dr. Lindale, vicar of Harlington. Bunyan describes him as "an old enemy to the truth." Likely enough he was the prompter at Wingate's elbow to secure Bunyan's arrest. The old vicar was very waspish that morning, "taunting at me," says Bunyan, "in many reviling terms," and finding it to his whim to work out some resemblance between John the tinker and Alexander the coppersmith. It is easy to picture this country parson working off his crotchet in his son-in-law's hall, parading and pirouetting before the young gospeller, rapping his cane on the floor and prodding his victim with verbal thrusts. He came at him, as Bunyan thought, "with a great deal of confidence of the victory," but after a pass

or two "was a little stopt, and went a softlier pace"; but he was not of the sort to give in to a tinker. He brought out his coppersmith analogy, "to which I answered that I also had read of very many priests and Pharisees that had their hands in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." "'Aye,' saith he (with Bunyan's writings in his eye), 'and you are one of those *scribes* and Pharisees: for you, with a pretence make long prayers to devour widows' houses.'" Bunyan must retort that if Lindale had got no more by preaching and praying than he himself had done, his reverence would not be so rich as he now was.

Parson Lindale, having thus spoken all unwittingly (and for the first and last time), into the phonograph of history, retires. We need not be too hard upon his prejudices. The two men were antipathetic, governed by different conventions and living in different worlds. Bunyan saw Lindale as an "old enemy to the truth," Lindale saw Bunyan as a presumptuous ignoramus and an enemy of the Church. The author of *An Exhortation to Peace and Unity* (1688) complains of upstart gospellers who with insufficient equipment were forward to thrust themselves into pulpits as expounders of the mysteries of revelation. Perhaps on the surface of things Lindale had some excuse for putting the Bedford tinker in that class.

We have a later scene by candle-light in the same hall. This time it is Wingate's brother-in-law, Lawyer Foster of Bedford, who figures in it.

Bunyan is again present, not yet having got behind the bars, and Foster, coming smiling out of the squire's parlour, "sees of me by the light of the candle, for it was dark night."

Dr. John Brown, apparently confusing one of Offor's curious footnotes with the text, says that Bunyan calls Foster "a right Judas." (Cf. Offor, Vol. I, p. 52, footnote.) Bunyan is innocent of the epithet, though not of the suggestion. "He said unto me, 'Who is there? John Bunyan?' with such seeming affection as if he would have leaped in my neck and kissed me, which made me somewhat wonder."

Foster, in truth, was disposed to be affable and, according to his standards, considerate. He gave Bunyan the law. To hold any such meetings as he had been conducting was now to be regarded as a breach of the peace, but "if I would leave off my preaching and follow my calling, I should have the Justices' favour and be acquitted." But Foster's suavity seems presently to have deserted him. He had to tell Bunyan that he was an ignorant man; that, not knowing the original languages, he could not understand the Scriptures; and that in his literal interpretations he was "as near the Papists as any." "He told me that [by week-day preaching] I made people neglect their calling," and "that there was none but a company of poor, simple, ignorant people that came to hear me."

Here spoke the voice of upper-class prejudice; not so unreasonable if we remember the mush-

room sects that were springing up and the plague of ignorant Scripture-quoting zealotry and charlatanry of the times. But Bunyan's counters were ready enough. It was not only the foolish and ignorant that came to hear him, "there were the wise as well"; but as, in any case, the foolish and ignorant had most need of teaching, he had best be at it. As for his not understanding the Scriptures, if none could understand them but those who had the original Greek and the like, only a very few could be saved! He certainly preached on weekdays as well as on Sundays, but "it was the duty of people, both rich and poor, to look out for their souls on those days, as well as for their bodies." And in the matter of taking the Scriptures literally, "I told him that those that were to be understood literally, we understood them so, but for those that were to be understood otherwise, we endeavoured so to understand them." "Which of the Scriptures," says Foster, "do you understand literally?" "I said, this: 'He that believeth shall be saved.'"

Perhaps the point is, that, affable or irritated, Foster was disposed to take Bunyan seriously. Once in his living presence, he found himself dealing with no ordinary tinker.

For the rest, Foster presently withdraws to report to the squire, "and then," says Bunyan, "came several of the Justice's servants to me"—a pleasant touch. These kindly folk, it seems, had grouped themselves in the shadows of the candle-lit hall to watch the proceedings, and their hearts

went out to the man of their own class. As soon as Foster was gone they gathered around Bunyan and urged him for his own sake to be reasonable. They told him that he was standing in his own light—standing too much "upon a nicety"—and that their master would surely let him off if only he would undertake not to "call the people together" again. But Bunyan would not quit his preaching. He "durst not." That "durst not" was the clue which the Wingates, Lindales and Fosters never got at. They were dealing with a man who was genuinely in the grip of a great fear, so much so that he could not be intimidated. He was panoplied in what he himself would have called the Fear of God.

(3)

So we have the famous trial-scene in the old chantry Chapel of Herne which did duty for a shire hall in Bunyan's Bedford. It was at the January Quarter Sessions, 1661. The Sessions Chairman was Sir John Kelynge, later to draw up the new Act of Uniformity, and now within five years of his appointment as Lord Chief Justice.

Again the observable fact is that Bunyan was taken seriously. He was charged with having "devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear Divine service" and with being "a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom." But after a perfunctory question or two

from the Bench (" Do you come to church—you know what I mean—to the parish church—to hear Divine service ? "), Kelynge found himself " at a point " with this tall raw-boned man with his " quick eyes," commanding countenance and mop of rusty hair ; and not simply so, but curiously interested as well, and drawn into a strange discussion. For in fact, as we know, the trial developed into nothing more than a lengthy and animated conversation between the two—a thing curious enough to behold and to hear, and plainly displeasing to some of the purple-faced country-gentry on the Bench.

Kelynge had a reputation for choler and the character of being better fitted to be a Rupertian *sabreur* than a judge ; but, apart from telling Bunyan at one point to " stop his canting, " and calling the Puritan parlance which Bunyan freely used, " pedlar's French," he showed himself almost genial. He drew from the prisoner that he was not against the use of the Common Prayer Book so much as against its compulsory use (" They that have a mind to use it," says Bunyan, " have their liberty ; that is, I would not keep them from it ; but for our parts, we can pray to God without it ") and agreed with him that with the best liturgical forms in the world all must be vain repetition, without the Spirit. Before, says Bunyan, a man can truly say Our Father, he must know what it is to be born of the Spirit. Kelynge " said that that was a truth."

Thus, amid explosive ejaculations and inter-

ruptions from the Snaggs and Chesters and Blundells on the Bench, the strange dialogue develops. "Let me," says Kelynge at one point, "a little open that Scripture to you: 'As every man hath received the gift'—that is, as everyone hath received a trade—'so let him follow it.' If any man hath received a gift of tinkering, as thou hast done, let him follow his tinkering; and so other men their trades, and the divine his calling." Bunyan makes short work of this line of exposition, and Kelynge admits for his own part that "he is not so well versed in Scripture as to dispute." There was no reason why, at this rate, the conversation between the Bench and the Dock should not be prolonged indefinitely. In fact it was not broken off until Bunyan had virtually convicted himself by bluntly declaring that if preaching the Gospel meant breaking the law he must be regarded as a law-breaker and should continue to break it at every opportunity. After this there was nothing left for Kelynge to do but pronounce sentence. "Hear your judgment. You must be had back again to prison, and there lie for three months following; and at three months' end, if you do not submit to go to church to hear Divine service, and leave your preaching, you must be banished the realm; and if after such a day as shall be appointed you to be gone, you shall be found in this realm, or be found to come over again without special license from the King, you must stretch by the neck for it, I tell you plainly."

We know that Bunyan's head did not droop. He tells us that his heart was greatly refreshed during his examination, and no doubt he was very far from self-pity. He had been able to do what he had resolved upon as he had paced up and down the close that November day in Samsell: he had shown that the man who had been "hearty and courageous" in the pulpit could, in the important hour, be as hearty and courageous in the Dock. As he was being led away he turned to give Kelynge a parting word. "I told him . . . I was at a point with him: for if I was out of prison to-day I would preach the Gospel again to-morrow, by the help of God." To this, says Bunyan, one of the gentry on the Bench made some reply, but "my jailer pulling me away to be gone, I could not tell what he said." No more can we. And it may be that for a finish to a memorable scene, that hoarse, unintelligible malediction, sounding thickly over the hubbub of the crowded courtroom, was appropriate enough.

(4)

At this time the one man who came near to penetrating between the joints of Bunyan's harness was Paul Cobb, the Clerk of the Peace.

Thanks to the industry of Dr. John Brown, we are allowed a glimpse or two of the Clerk in his later career; in his robes of office, for instance, as Mayor of Bedford, or taking coach for London at the Old Swan gate, the new-modelled town-

charter in his valise, and in his loyal bosom some hope of kingly favour and a knighthood. We shall be allowed to prefer the earlier and humbler Cobb, whose name itself somehow suggests an honest solidity, not yet, at any rate, belied.

As Clerk of the Peace he was sent to Bunyan at the end of the three months' term of imprisonment. His errand was to secure Bunyan's submission. He failed; but he showed a fundamental courtesy, humanity and good sense which at this day serve his memory better than any possible or impossible titles of royal favour.

Cobb begins as amiably as Foster ("Neighbour Bunyan, how do you do?"), but in this case there is no suspicion of guile. He sticks to his point that Bunyan as a Christian and a citizen must submit to the law. Bunyan has a rather lawyer-like defence. He argues that the Elizabethan Act under which he was indicted had no proper application to his case. He would not, he says, entertain so much uncharitableness either of Queen Elizabeth or her Parliament as to believe that any hindrance was intended against meetings for "peaceable worship." "My end in meeting with others is simply to do as much good as I can." But every one will say the same, says Cobb, and cites Venner's Fifth Monarchy insurrection. No doubt Venner, too, and his zealots would claim as much. This touches Bunyan on his Tory and loyalist side. He "abhors" Venner's practices, he says, and looks upon it "as my duty to behave myself under the King's government both as

becomes a man and a Christian ; and if an occasion were offered me, I should willingly manifest my loyalty to my Prince, both by word and deed."

Well then, Bunyan must show his Christian loyalty by submitting to the King's laws ; and Cobb seems to suggest that if only Bunyan will be reasonably discreet he will be granted considerable latitude. He does not press the matter of attending service in the parish church, and he reminds Bunyan that he may continue to exhort his neighbours in private, " so be you do not call together an assembly of people ; and truly you may do much good to the Church of Christ if you would go this way." Perhaps in this there is a touch of Pepys' sentiment, who wished that the persecuted Quakers would not meet together, or at least that they would be careful and not " get themselves catched." Why, asks Cobb, must good man Bunyan stand so strictly upon this one thing as to insist upon public assemblies and not be content to do good " in a neighbourly way " ? At least why not " forbear a while and sit still, till you see further how things will go " ?

All this seems very reasonable and appealing, but Bunyan quotes Wycliffe to the effect that a man who has a gift to preach and leaves off exercising it for fear of men is a traitor to Christ. Here Cobb thinks he sees an opening. " How shall we know," he asks, " that you have this gift ? " Would Bunyan be willing to have the whole matter referred, as a case of conscience, to the arbitration of two disinterested persons ?

Bunyan inquires if these two persons would be infallible. No, Cobb must admit they would not be beyond possibility of mistake. "Then," says the obstinate Bunyan, "it is possible my judgment may be as good as theirs." He prefers, he says, to be judged by an infallible rule, namely the Holy Scriptures. Cobb's retort is obvious: Bunyan takes the Scriptures one way, another takes them a different way. The Scriptures may be infallible, but who shall judge between fallible and contradictory interpretations? So Bunyan is brought up against the ancient point of interrogation as to the seat of authority in religion.

His inadequate answer is that the Scriptures themselves will judge between conflicting interpretations—"if rightly compared." But who shall judge which is the right comparison? Is Bunyan willing, inquires Cobb, to abide by the judgment of the Church? Yes; he is most willing. That is, he will stand to the judgment of the "true Church" as a communion of faithful regenerate souls whose ruling is according to the Scriptures. But we are left to understand that to such a society of the faithful, or New Testament church, Bunyan, according to his honest conviction, had years ago submitted the whole matter and had been solemnly set apart to the exercise of his gift.

The patient Cobb, perceiving that nothing is to be gained by pursuing this line, begins afresh. Neighbour Bunyan, he says, ought to reconsider his position, for alas! what benefit would it be to

his friends if he got himself banished beyond the seas " into Spain, or Constantinople, or some other remote part of the world " ? " Pray be ruled ! " says Cobb. (" *Indeed, sir,*" breaks in the jailer, " *I hope he will be ruled !* ")

And then the Clerk gets to close quarters, pressing Bunyan hard on his own ground. He reminds him again that the Scriptures teach that " the powers that be are ordained of God " and that it is a Christian duty, enjoined in the New Testament, to submit to the King as supreme and to governors as to them that are sent by him. Well then, Charles II was King and must be submitted to : and " the King commands you that you should not have any private meetings . . . and he is ordained by God ; therefore you should not have any." Cobb was now " at a point " with neighbour Bunyan, and ready to push his advantage. How far is a Christian justified by his New Testament in setting aside the law of the land ? The law in this case was not compelling Bunyan to a wrong course, but only holding him back from a course that seemed to him to be right.

Thus brought to bay, Bunyan gives his famous reply : " I told him that Paul did own the powers that were in his day as to be of God ; and yet he was often in prison under them for all that. And also, though Jesus Christ told Pilate that he had no power against him but of God, yet he died under the same Pilate. ' And yet,' said I, ' I hope you will not say that either Paul or Christ were such as did deny magistrates, and

so sinned against God in slighting the ordinance. *Sir,' said I, 'the law hath provided two ways of obeying: the one to do that which I, in my conscience, do believe that I am bound to do, actively; and* [as for the other] *where I cannot obey actively, then I am willing to lie down and to suffer what they shall do unto me.'* "

Thus does Bunyan propound his policy and principle of resistance by non-resistance, of victory through vanquishment, of sovereignty through suffering—through the forces of the soul. No class, no nation has yet fully committed itself to that ordeal, arming itself with this sole weapon of the terrible meek: and the honest Cobb, when his eyes first caught its blade-flash playing upon the countenance of the man who then unsheathed it, may be forgiven if he thought it but a brittle instrument. Yet it was one wrought and tempered in holier fires than Toledo or Damascus could provide—a Calvary blade: and somehow, after all, Cobb found himself strangely impressed. At this point, says Bunyan, he "sat still" and said no more. Only "I did thank him for his civil and meek discoursing with me; and so we parted. O that we might meet in heaven!"

(5)

One other scene we have, and in this it is not Bunyan but his wife Elizabeth who takes the stage.

It seems that Bunyan and his friends had some hopes of getting his case reopened. To that end

Elizabeth Bunyan had even journeyed to London, armed with a petition for her husband's release, and had presented it to "my Lord Barkwood, one of the House of Lords," not without some encouragement. He "took it of me," says the brave Elizabeth, "and presented it to some of the rest of the House of Lords; who when they had seen it, they said that they could not release him, but had committed his releasement to the judges at the next assizes."

Accordingly, at the Midsummer Assize of 1661, with good Sir Matthew Hale come to Bedford on circuit, Elizabeth tried again, presenting her petition to Hale "who very mildly received it at her hand, telling her that he would do her and me (Bunyan) the best good he could; but he feared he could do none." Next day, "lest they should, through the multitude of business, forget" she waylaid the Judge's coach as it passed from the Swan to the Chapel of Herne, and flung a copy of the petition through the open window. Judge Twisden was inside, and took it ill. He "snapt her up" and angrily sent her about her business. Nothing daunted, she made her way to the court and appealed to Hale, who "seemed willing to give her audience," but one of the local gentry interfered. "Justice Chester"—Henry Chester of Lidlington, Wingate's uncle—"stept up and said that I was convicted in the court and that I was a hot-spirited fellow, or words to that purpose, whereat he waived it and did not meddle therewith." Finally, the Assize being

over, she ventures one more effort. On the kindly advice of the High Sheriff she makes her way to the Swan, where "the two judges and many justices and gentry of the country were in company together."

There could hardly be a more engaging contrast than the sight of this Puritan girl—she was hardly more than a girl—framed in the doorway of the Swan Chamber that summer evening, surveying this assemblage of her betters all "pranked and pounced," "starched and steeled" with their periwigs, buckles and feathers. She falters a moment on the threshold and enters with "abashed face and trembling heart." By a right instinct she makes straight for the one man in the room from whom she is sure of consideration—Hale himself. Unhappily for her, Twisden and Chester are beside him, and at sight of her the two of them swell up into purple ire. Bunyan, with his knack of catching a man's reflection in the mirror of his own words and phrases, lets us see Chester in the broken glass of his irate repetitions. "'It is recorded, woman, it is recorded,' said Justice Chester; as if it must be of necessity true because it was recorded. . . . Justice Chester was often up with this, 'He is convicted' and 'It is recorded.'" Bunyan also permits us to see this Bedford knight "scratching his head for anger," which is, indeed, our last sight of him. Twisden is worse. He tells Elizabeth that she makes poverty her cloak, and that her man was making a better thing of it running up and down the

country preaching than by following his tinkering. " ' He preach the Word of God ! ' said Twisden : and withal she thought he would have struck her ; ' he runneth up and down and doth harm.' "

It was Hale who was the great gentleman.

" My Lord," says Elizabeth, " I have four small children that cannot help themselves, of which one is blind, and have nothing to live upon but the charity of good people."

" Hast thou four children ? " says Hale. " Thou art but a young woman to have four children."

" My Lord, I am but mother-in-law to them, having not been married to him yet full two years. Indeed, I was with child when my husband was first apprehended, but being young, and unaccustomed to such things, I, being smayed at the news, fell into labour, and so continued for eight days, and than was delivered, but my child died."

At this, we are told, the good Hale " looked very soberly " and exclaimed, " Alas, poor woman ! " continuing to be very mild in his carriage toward her ; albeit he could do no more than advise her to get a writ of error.

Dr. John Brown comments appropriately upon Elizabeth's spirited retorts upon Chester and Twisden.—" Because he is a tinker and a poor man, therefore he is despised and cannot have justice " : but " God hath owned him, and done much good by him " ; and " When the righteous Judge shall appear, it will be known that his doctrine is not the doctrine of the devil."—

Could this English peasant woman, he asks, have spoken with more dignity "had she been a crowned queen"? We may be sure that to the girl-wife, standing before that contemptuous and glittering company and achieving her triumph of brave defiance in the dignity of a great love, a crown would have been a garish ornament. But perhaps, after all, Dr. Brown omits the supreme touch.

"Several things," says Elizabeth, "I forget; only this I remember, that though I was somewhat timorous at my first entrance into the chamber, yet before I went out I could not but break forth into tears, not so much because they were so hard hearted against me and my husband, but to think what a sad account such poor creatures will have to give at the coming of the Lord."

Elizabeth's eyes were glistening with tears. Twisden and Chester and their company must have seen it. What they did not perceive—what could never by any chance have penetrated their armoured stupidity—was that this peasant girl was weeping *for them.*

Thus the curtain finally descends upon the scenes which introduce us to Bunyan's long imprisonment. Now he was to attain to himself, passing through a new, supreme crisis in his inner life and emerging into a new and hard-won freedom.

Chapter VIII — *"The Everlasting Yea"*

We shall find no better description of Bunyan in his imprisonment than the one left to us by a seventeenth-century sympathizer :

" It was by making him a visit in prison that I first saw him, and became acquainted with him ; and I must profess, I could not but look upon him to be a man of an excellent spirit, zealous for his Master's honour, and chearfully committing all his own concernments unto God's disposal. When I was there, above threescore dissenters were in the prison, besides himself, taken but a little before at a religious meeting at Kaistow, in the county of Bedford ; besides two eminent dissenting ministers, to wit, Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Dun . . . by which means the prison was much crouded. Yet in the midst of all that hurry which so many new-comers occasioned, I have heard Mr. Bunyan both preach and pray with that mighty spirit of faith and plerophory of divine assistance, that he has made me stand and wonder. Nor did he, while he was in prison, spend his time in a supine and careless manner, or eat the bread of idleness, for there I have been witness that his own hands have ministered to his and his family's necessities, by making many hundred gross of long tagged thread laces, to fill up the vacancies of his time. . . . There also I surveyed his library, the

least and yet the best I ever saw, consisting only of two books, the Bible and the *Book of Martyrs*."

But before Bunyan attained to this liberty and "plerophory" he had need, as we have seen, to pass through another, in some respects the crowning, crisis of his inner life.

(1)

Nothing in confessional literature could well be more artless than Bunyan's almost casual relation of this experience. "I will tell you a pretty business," he begins, and goes on to show to us how it befell him, while prison was still a new thing to him, to face it out with Fear. It may be said that in this supreme ordeal Bunyan stands before us at last in utter nudity of soul, as once, in the great hour of renouncement and dedication, Francis Bernadone stood before his accusers in nudity of body. Every comfort, every consolation of existence, every hope for time or eternity—he is stripped of them all. It is as if there were nothing left of Bunyan but sheer *will*, purpose, devotion. Only it is more than the nakedness of renunciation that we have here, it is the nakedness of birth. Through this supreme crisis he is born into a new world of certitude and freedom.

He tells us that before his arrest he saw "what was a coming," and the consideration was warm upon his heart to rehearse the ordeal in his own mind in advance. He reasoned with himself that it were best to anticipate the worst; that if

he provided only for a prison, then the whip and the pillory would come unawares, and if he provided only for these, he would still be unprepared for banishment; and if he fortified his mind against banishment, then the scaffold might yet dismay him. Therefore it came to him that if ever he were to suffer rightly he must first pass sentence of death "upon everything that can properly be called a thing of this life." He told himself that the best way was "to count 'the grave my house, to make my bed in darkness, and to say to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.' That is, to familiarize these things to me."

Thus he braced himself for the important hour. He feared for his family more than for himself. To part with wife and little ones was "as the pulling the flesh from my bones"; especially there was the appeal of his blind child, "nearer my heart than all I had beside." "O the thoughts of the hardships my blind one might go under would break my heart to pieces." Nevertheless, he was sustained, and during the stir and challenge of his arrest and trial he had lived above his moods. But now the reaction set in, and the old doubts and dreads which had threatened his sanity in former years rolled back upon him with a horror of great darkness.

In the assurance that he was a child of the Covenant, and that, come life or death, all his cares and concernments were under the covenanted providence of the Most High, he had

been able to face the worst adversity; but now "all the things of God were hid" from him, and no comfort appeared. Being still "but a young prisoner, and unacquainted with the laws," his imagination began to be morbidly busy with what he believed to be his approaching execution. Often he fancied himself on the scaffold-ladder, the hangman's noose already about his neck, and his misery was that he felt himself unfit to die. The martyr-saint, secure in the holy Promises, might welcome such a death, seeing in its aspect even the smile of the Beloved; but this was not for him. "The tempter followed me with, 'But whither must you go when you die? What will become of you? Where will you be found in another world?'" and it came to him that, with such whisperings and fears tormenting him, his outward demeanour must tell the tale at the last. He thought with shame that he should make but "a scrabbling shift" to clamber up the gallows-ladder, and that with such quakings upon him he should give the enemy reason to reproach God's people for their cowardice. "This therefore lay with great trouble upon me, for methought I was ashamed to die with a pale face and tottering knees for such a cause as this."

We have to remember that there was always for Bunyan Cobb's respectable back-door of escape. He was not required to renounce his faith, nor even to cease witnessing to it. He might continue, in Cobb's phrase, to "do as much good as he could in a neighbourly way."

This open door must have tormented him now, plaguing his resolution. Beyond this, it is not for us to conceive how forlorn of soul he was, nor what it must have meant to have the gallows-shadow upon him and know it for the shadow not simply of death but of eternal night. Nor may we understand how inexpressibly and seductively sweet to him, as the only precarious barrier between him and that final darkness, were the consolations of this earthly life. Yet we know that in any case life is sweet to a nature newly aroused and conscious of latent, unrealized powers struggling mightily for expression; and that in a heart unspoiled by sophistry and insincerity the appeal of family-affection is very strong.

Thus a hundred arguments must have pleaded in his mind, urging him to follow the easier course, and against them he could summon, as it seemed, no decisive reason. There was no clear shining, no authentic gleam; what enveloped him was that "fixed, starless, Tartarean black," wherein the soul is left without external guidance save for the false flames floating over the quagmires of compromise.

(2)

In all this, it may be, we are somehow reminded of those sultry, insomniac days and nights when Carlyle, full of ill-humours, and feeling as if the heavens and the earth were but boundless jaws of a devouring monster, wandered over the sun-baked pavements of Leith and the sands of Portobello, and faced his Fear.

In Carlyle's case we know how matters took a turn at last. "All at once there rose a Thought in me." The Thought was in the nature of an interrogatory. "'What *art* thou afraid of? . . . What is the sum total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will or can do against thee! . . . Let it come, then; I will meet it and defy it!'" Thus it was that, with the Everlasting No pealing through all the recesses of his being, Carlyle "with emphasis recorded his Protest." "Such a Protest, the most important transaction in Life, may that same Indignation and Defiance, in a psychological point of view, be fitly called. The Everlasting No had said: 'Behold, thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine (the Devil's)'; to which my whole Me now made answer: '*I* am not thine, but Free, and forever hate thee!'"

It was not otherwise with Bunyan. For the point is, that in this hour of darkness and seeming dereliction, in the extreme solitude of his soul, it came to him that here, once and for all, he must challenge the uttermost and the worst. He tells us that the consideration fell with weight upon him that it was for the Word and Way of God he was in his present condition, and that he was engaged not to flinch a hair's breadth from it. It came to him that, independent of all rewards and allurements, of all qualms and sinkings, there was such a thing as Duty. "It was my duty to

stand to His Word, whether He would ever look upon me or no, or save me at the last: wherefore, thought I, the point being thus, I am for going on." With Cobb's door of escape at his back and the gibbet and eternal night before him, Bunyan, the point being thus, is for going on.

One thinks of Childe Roland's last view of the Safe Road:

> "'twas gone; gray plain all round:
> Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.
> I might go on; naught else remained to do."

Naught else, for he was pledged to the Dark Tower. And so, like Roland, Bunyan presses on through that "fell cirque and stark black death" until at last, seeing all and knowing all, in that moment which knelled eternal woes, "dauntless the slug-horn to his lips he set" and blew the blast of everlasting defiance and high resolve. "'If God doth not come in,' thought I, 'I will leap off the ladder blindfold into eternity, sink or swim, come heaven, come hell, Lord Jesus, if thou wilt catch me, do; if not, I will venture for thy name.'" When Bunyan, the point being thus, had attained to that decision, he had ridden up to his Fear. It was as if he did actually there and then, come heaven, come hell, eternal night and eternal flame, venture all in that final blast that was at once a call, a prayer, an ultimate eternal avowal.

Thus John Bunyan to the Dark Tower came. And in that instant there was the sound of trum-

pets and the lifting up of banners, and the Dark Tower shone as the sun. For as he has shown us, he had no sooner ridden up to his Fear, than it was transformed into something full of welcome and gladness and good hope. He had indeed proved his soul. He had found that it was in him to be willing to serve God for nothing and worse than nothing, and it came to him with a sudden thrill of surprise that this could never be the mood and temper of reprobation. "'How now?' thought I. 'Is this [not] the sign of an upright soul, to desire to serve God when all is taken from him? . . .' Now was my heart full of comfort, for I hoped it was sincere. I would not have been without this trial for much; I am comforted every time I think of it, and I hope I shall bless God for ever for the teaching I have had by it."

Henceforth his path was clear. Toward the end of his imprisonment he challenges his enemies to judge if they could find a word in his writing or preaching which could show him deserving of hanging or banishment "according to their tremendous sentence." "Indeed my principles are such as lead me to a denial to communicate in the things of the Kingdom of Christ with the ungodly and openly profane; neither can I, in or by the superstitious inventions of this world consent that my soul should be governed in any of my approaches to God." Except, then, for this one thing, "for which I ought not to be rebuked," he would, he trusted, discover himself at all times a peaceable and obedient subject.

"But if nothing will do, unless I make of my conscience a continual butchery and slaughter-shop, unless, putting out my own eyes, I commit me to the blind to lead me, as I doubt is desired by some, I have determined, the Almighty God being my help and shield, yet to suffer, if frail life might continue so long, even till the moss shall grow on mine eyebrows, rather than thus to violate my faith and principles."

It may be said, then, of this strange knight-errant of Puritanism that his imprisonment liberated him. We behold in time the new Bunyan, chastened, invincible, full of hearty humanity and good cheer,—no longer sitting behind mental shutters, taken up with dark questionings concerning his own soul. Now he is able calmly to take his measure of life and to observe men and events with a judgment advantaged by detachment. He himself has expressed it characteristically in his own rugged verse :

"This gaol to us is as a hill
From whence we plainly see
Beyond this world, and take our fill
Of things that lasting be.

. . . . . .

"Here we can see how all men play
Their parts, as on a stage,
How good men suffer for God's way,
And bad men at them rage."

The fact is that in his prison writings and subsequent works we see Bunyan not simply as poet and dreamer, but, in his own naïve and

vigorous way, as practical idealist and reformer. To those, indeed, who are concerned to deny to him any intelligent contact with matter-of-fact problems, who see him as a Philistine of visionary genius, a rustic gospeller, an other-worldly allegorist, any discussion of his outlook upon the world of his day must seem beside the mark. What had this uneducated tinker, whose mind played between broken kettles and "long tagged laces" on the one hand, and his Bible, his *Book of Martyrs* and his allegories on the other—what had he to do with problems of Church and State? Yet in these matters Bunyan took himself seriously enough, and not without reason. His vigorous practical intellect must not be underrated. He was a dreamer, but, like Jacob, he had his dreaming head close to the solid earth. He dreamed over hard facts, as it were on a pillow of stone. In his thinking he was governed, no doubt, by the Puritan and evangelical conventions of his day, yet he took his own line; his reactions were individual and characteristic.

(1)

We may take, for example, his attitude to Rome. Here, of course, he is the thoroughgoing Puritan, but still he must take his own way.

It may be that he knew little of ecclesiastical history beyond what he could cull from his well-thumbed *Book of Martyrs*, but he had imagination for the majestic audacity of Rome. Its hierarchs, he says, began to be high when they

had "so inveigled Constantine that he bestowed upon them much riches and honour," and now "they are clambered up above kings and princes and emperors." "They wear," he says, "the triple crown; they have made kings bow at their feet and emperors stand barefoot at their gates"; "they have got kingdoms, they have got crowns, they have got—what have they not got?" To him the answer is plain: "They have got everything but grace." This is Bunyan, and as to this there is much in his writings which is replete with the wealthy and vituperative slang of Puritanism.

It may be said that Bunyan detested the Roman system as cordially as, for example, Cobbett detested the new industrialism, and possibly for much the same reason. Each of these plain Englishmen saw in his respective bugbear what in Cobbett's case Mr. Chesterton has described as the toppling triumph of machines over men. And what they saw they sometimes put into language which Mr. Chesterton so effectively defends in the hero of the Rural Rides—the language (or its Puritan equivalent) now localized under the name of Billingsgate.

Cobbett, says Mr. Chesterton, saw in the new order the sprawling omnipotence of financiers over patriots; Bunyan might have said that he saw in that older order, then, as now, making a new bid for power in Europe, the sprawling omnipotence of the priest over the plain believer. It is true that in an age like ours it is easier to understand the fierce antipathies of Cobbett than

those of Bunyan and his kind. Men do in fact lash themselves into fury at the assumptions of our high priests of finance who have nothing of the Puritan feeling against those who would corner the markets of the soul. For it may be that at the moment we are apt to feel more deeply in matters of finance than in matters of faith. But at any rate it may be well to remember that in Bunyan's day a certain menacing shadow still lay over England, and in the background of his world such things as the Paris Matins, the Dragonnades, the Edict of Nantes and the Marian and Savoy persecutions were not yet faded out of their original luridity.

For the rest we may understand that the protest of Bunyan and the Puritans of his time lay in the recognition that, in his own phrase, they must not be governed in their approaches to God. That is to say, it centred in their claim that fallen man, with all his corruptions and infirmities upon him, had after all this inalienable right,—That he should be free, not indeed to call his soul his own, but to know it to be God's, and immediately God's, and not in ward to a system which took His place. It is true that the Puritan recognized an external infallible authority. Bunyan had his Bible. But his Bible was his open and examined authority, and he was not "governed in his approaches" to it. In other words, the Puritan contention was that man must be free to bestow his ultimate loyalties upon an examined authority certified directly to his con-

science by the Eternal Spirit, rather than upon an authority which put itself in the place of his conscience and judgment and dictated his decisions. Herein, as we are sufficiently assured, was the germinal idea which lay behind not only the democratic revolutions of later times but also the theological revolutions which have successively re-fashioned and are still re-fashioning the Puritan faith itself.

Bunyan, then, feared the mechanization of faith as Cobbett feared the mechanization of industry. The world, he says, will never be in its right wits, nor will brave days for religion return, until the claims of the Papacy are out of the way. Yet he had to scandalize his stricter brethren by declaring his willingness to commune with any member of the Roman Church who was ready to hold fellowship with him. "If there be any saint yet remaining in that church" (and he must believe that many "naturalized to the country and manners of Rome" were of the people of God) "let him come to us, and we will have communion with him. . . . My heart and the door of our congregation is open to receive them into closest fellowship with us." Only he must add that to suppose that any man would stand a member of two bodies "so diametrically opposed" were to suppose an impossibility.

But where Bunyan outdistanced a host of his co-religionists was in his vision of what was to take the place of the shattered unity of Rome. It belonged to his untutored wisdom to recognize that

to break up the Papal unity and call the fragments Protestantism was no solution of the world's problem. He never supposed, as so many have supposed, that it was enough that a world delivered from an era of religious coercion should be given over to an era of religious confusion. That is to say, Bunyan in his ingenuous and rustic way really did believe in the Reformation. He believed in it not simply as a Protest and a Revolt, but as, in purpose and promise, a Re-formation leading to a new and better unity. For the workingman who gave us his *Pilgrim's Progress*, no less than the scholar who gave us *Paradise Lost*, had first of all to compose his own religious philosophy and attain to his own outlook.

(2)

Bunyan's hope, then, for Christendom and the world focuses upon his vision of a restored Church which shall yet appear upon earth in the glory of the City of God. This he sets forth in his *Holy City*, a treatise brought out in the fifth year of his imprisonment. He must explain to us that he has not given "either in line or in margent" a cloud of sentences from the learned Fathers who have handled this same theme before him; he is in fact empty of learned language; but nevertheless he has his Bible, and "what God makes mine by the evidence of His Word and Spirit, that I dare make bold with."

It is St. John's description of the descent of the New Jerusalem that gives him his theme; and he

sees it as no material advent but a descent in the sense of spiritual generation. That is to say, from the Church Mystical is descended at last a new order "so exact in all things according to the laws and liberties, privileges and riches of a city" that it shall "lie level with the great charter of heaven." Thus the New Jerusalem is the spiritual Society of the Faithful expanded into a world-order—the City with which the nations shall traffic for her goodly merchandise of truth and grace, and which shall be the mistress of the world.

For the present, says Bunyan, it is far otherwise. The Churches are like a routed army in the dark, "too prone to shoot and kill even their very right-hand men": but presently it shall be different. The darkness is slowly passing; and "it is darkness that keepeth God's people from knowing one another, and makes them stand at so great a distance both in judgment and affections." When the Lord shall bring again Zion they shall see eye to eye. "It shall not be then, as now, a Popish doctrine, a Quaker's doctrine, a prelatical doctrine, and the Presbyter, Independent and Anabaptist, thus distinguished and thus confounded and destroying," but there shall be an undivided fellowship ruled by love.

"Then will be a golden world." The testimony of the Gospel of Christ will take on a new authority, and "all the graces that at this day lie scattered here and there, some in one place

and some in another, they shall be found nowhere in that day but in the City, the Church, that walks according to rule." Then " holiness, goodness and truth shall with great boldness, countenance and reverence, walk upon the face of all the earth."

Bunyan goes on to say that this Church of the future shall be led progressively into the knowledge of the truth—" now one step in this truth and then another in that, according to the dispensation of God and the light of the day she lives in." In like manner the Divine Society itself is being progressively prepared for and built up. He has his philosophy of history, and divides the Reformation age, past, present and future, into three eras: (1) the era of Altar-work; (2) the era of Temple-work; (3) the era of City-work. The first era, as he sees it, is completed. The true spiritual Altar has already been restored and set up by the great builders of the Protestant faith—" Wicliff, Huss, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin." The second era will see the gradual founding and fashioning of the Temple—the restored, united Apostolic Church. The third and crowning era will see the establishment of the new world-order—the City of God itself.

But while Bunyan holds by a Church-civilization he is at pains to show that the Church's authority is not to take the form of temporal power. This notion of an earthly empire, he says, " grates too near the ground " for him to

believe in it. It is inconceivable, he thinks, that after "sixteen hundred years' warming in the bosom of Christ" that kind of glory should appeal to His Church. Therefore "the governors of this world need not at all to fear a disturbance from her, or a diminishing of ought they have. . . . Her glory is spiritual and heavenly" and she will not resort to compulsion. Those, indeed, who have most of the honour and glory of this world will yet "stoop their top-gallant" to this City; not by force, however, but by constraint of the very beauty of the City itself.

He shrewdly observes that not many of the rulers of the earth may be expected to support the new order while it remains merely an ideal: "The City must be built before they all of them will fall in love with her." Until then, as he sees it, the great ones of the world are more likely to be found in love with Mistress Babylon, and concerned to "defend the riding lady from the gunshot that the saints will continually be making at her by the force of the Word and Spirit of God." "The great conquest of the Kings will be by the beauty and glory of this City when she is built."

All this is not unremarkable, coming from a poor ill-educated gospeller shut up with his Bible in a Restoration gaol. It may still, indeed, be a little advanced for us, flinging its idealism beyond the lines of present attainment. Certain it is that from one of Bunyan's school we might have expected something far different. A

vehement apocalypticism was then popular together with a growing belief that the end of the world was at hand; and in truth there was little in the outward seeming of things to minister to any hope save that ultimate expectation which looks away from the whole order and disorder of the world to some cataclysmic intrusion. But Bunyan, while holding to his apocalyptic faith, must assert his confidence in a Providential and evangelical law of progress. Better times will come with better men, and He that hath the hearts of all men in His hand can change them from worse to better, and so bad times into good.

(3)

For the present, then, the call was to cease disputing and dividing over "circumstantialls" and to concentrate upon the common evangelical faith. This, next only to his "converting work," was probably what Bunyan regarded as his message, and over and over again he returns to it.

There can be no doubt that so far as his personal observance of the ordinance of Christian baptism is concerned, Bunyan must be accounted a Baptist. Dr. John Brown has pointed out that according to the parish registers one, at least, of Bunyan's children was baptized in infancy, but in all his discussions with his Baptist brethren he writes as one who, like themselves, had submitted to the rite of immersion. But it is equally clear that he broke with those of his own persuasion

who were for separating from other evangelicals on that issue.

The English Baptists, it may be noted, had begun to form into separate societies in the early years of the seventeenth century. Their separation from the Independents and other communions was gradual, but by the time of Bunyan's ministry they numbered over 240 congregations. These were the beginnings of that communion which was to give to the Church of Christ a Robert Hall, a William Carey, a Christmas Evans, a Spurgeon, an Alexander Maclaren, a John Clifford. But in Bunyan's day the tendency of Baptists was to define their principles in terms of strict communion; and their argument was cogent enough. Holding that the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were essential to the order of the Christian Church, they maintained that Baptism in the Scriptural and Apostolic usage was a confession of faith on the part of the baptized, immersion being the Scriptural form. It followed that for them the rite of immersion was the door to church communion and necessary to orderly fellowship. This is simply to say that in their own way the Strict Baptists were High Churchmen, with an argument from the letter of the New Testament which hardly suffered by comparison with that of other exclusive communions.

The point is that Bunyan in his appeal for Christian union challenges the whole separatist position as it centred upon the ritual ordinances

of the Church. "I count them not," he says, "the fundamentals of our Christianity." Even among things of Scriptural authority, he argues, there must be an order of importance. Forms of worship, however Scriptural, are at most our "servants and mystical ministers to teach and instruct us." They are "shadowish," the substance being the spiritual truths which they represent. It is possible, he says, to "commit idolatry even with God's own appointments," by moving them "from the place and end where by God they are appointed." "Prayer, hearing, reading—for what are these things ordained but that we might by the godly use of them attain to more of the knowledge of God, and be strengthened by His grace to serve Him better according to His moral law? Baptism, fellowship, and the Lord's Supper are ordained for these ends also. But there is a vast difference between using of these things, and a using them for these ends. What has a man done that is baptized if he pursues not the end for which that appointment was ordained? The like I say of fellowship, of breaking of bread. . . . I am of that man's mind as to practical righteousness who said to Christ, 'Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth: for to love the Lord our God with all the heart and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.'" He is of that man's mind, and holds that "a man who be-

lieveth in Jesus and fulfilleth the royal law doth more glorify God and honour religion in the world than he that keepeth, if there were so many, ten thousand figurative laws."

So he advances his principle of differentiation between the form and substance of faith. "I do not plead for a despising of baptism, but a bearing with our brother that cannot do it for want of light." "The best of baptism he hath—the signification thereof; he wanteth only the outward show." This is Bunyan's broad principle of union in spiritual fundamentals as distinct from forms and "circumstantialls," and he applies it to all the sects. He could have sung—probably did often sing—the quaint Communion Hymn in Sternhold and Hopkins' Collection:

"And as the cornes by unity
Into one loafe are knit,
So is the Lord and his whole Church,
Though he in heaven sit.

"As many grapes make but one wine,
So should we be but one
In faith and love in Christ above
And unto Christ alone."

By what rule, then, he is asked, would he gather men into Church communion? His answer is prompt. It is by the rule of faith in Christ and "moral duties Gospelized": and "if churches, after the confession of faith, made more use of the Ten Commandments to judge of the fitness of persons by," he is of opinion it would be better

for all concerned. "For God's people to divide into parties, or to shut each other from church communion, though from greater points and upon higher pretences than that of water baptism, hath heretofore [in the New Testament] been counted carnal and the actors herein babyish Christians"; and, in truth, "Let the cry be never so loud, 'Christ,' 'order,' 'the rule,' 'the command,' or the like, carnality is the bottom"—carnality and the iniquity that cleaves to pride of opinion. And for the rest, "the more a man stands upon his points to justify himself and to condemn his brethren, the more danger is he in of being overcome of divers evils."

All this, in essence, he sets forth in his prison-treatise *A Confession of My Faith and Reason of My Practice*, written in 1672. He was dealt with faithfully. His scandalized brethren took him to task and told him for his good that he was a troubler of Israel, a Diotrephes loving pre-eminence, an Ishmael with his hand turned against his brothers, and (this last a comprehensive extinguisher in large demand in Puritan controversy) a *Machiavelli*. All this, no doubt, has long since been well forgotten; and the astonishing brazier who confronted his fellow-Dissenters with so challenging a protest is remembered only for a book thrown off in later years as a prison pastime. Yet it is doubtful that Bunyan would have been gratified to know that he would be forgotten as an apostle of Christian union and remembered only for the fame of his pilgrim-

story. Similarly, one may imagine, the good king would hardly have been pleased had it been whispered to him that his immortality stood secure, not in his battles with the Danes, but in the affair of the bakestone cakes. For it may be said that to Bunyan, at the time of its composition, the "immortal allegory" was little more than an affair of cakes; but the fight for Christian union was an affair of swords and banners—the battle of the Lord.

But the truth seems to be that when Bunyan gave to the world his *Pilgrim's Progress* he did in fact unfurl a banner of Christian catholicity more potent than all his tracts on "water baptism as no bar to communion." And for us the point to observe is, that if he had not first broken the bounds of sectarian partisanry and made for the open country of the soul, we should never have had the Dream at all. Baptists, Independents, Presbyterians, Episcopalians there may have been, more than a few, who had a literary turn and the gift of allegory; but if a score of them had been set the task of writing of the Christian pilgrimage, the result might easily have been a score of sectarian tractates. By the gifts of nature and the grace of God, and with a mind clarified by these earlier engagements, Bunyan in due time left us something that was not at all the tractate of a sect but the book that has become the *vade-mecum* of all pilgrim souls.

(4)

There was another development. In the third year of his imprisonment, before the publication of his *Holy City*, he brought out his *Christian Behaviour* in which he writes of "moral duties Gospelized." He is very Puritan in his view of the subordination of women, but he is not prepared to leave the emphasis there. It is unseemly that a woman "so much as once in all her life-time" should "offer to over-top her husband" or "parrot it against him with a brangling tongue": but no woman should be her husband's slave; "women are their husband's yokefellows." "Be such a husband to thy believing wife that she may say, 'God hath not only given me a husband, but such a husband as preacheth to me every day the carriage of Christ to His Church."

Children must be carefully studied, "instructed seasonably." Their heads must not be filled with whimsies that will teach them to be malapert and vain, and on the other hand parents must avoid harshness. "Take heed thou use not unsavoury and unseemly words in thy chastening of them; this is devilish. Take heed thou do not use them to many chiding words and threatenings, mixed with lightness and laughter; this will harden. Speak not much nor often, but pertinent to them with all gravity." He must add a characteristic touch: "See if fair words will win them. This is God's way with his children."

Masters must understand that they have duties

both to the bodies and the souls of their servants. They must beware of turning them into slaves by overworking and underpaying them, by beguiling them with false promises and "wire-drawing" them to "such wages as indeed is too little and inconsiderable for such work." "I have heard some poor servants say that in some carnal families they have had more liberty to God's things, and more fairness of dealing, than among professors. But this stinketh." "Servants are goers as well as comers" (a shrewd thrust); "take heed that thou give them no occasion to scandal the gospel when they are gone for what they observed thee unrighteously to do when they were with thee."

So he goes on, not at all the "immortal dreamer," but the solid Englishman laying down the common sense of the godly life. In his later writings he returns to this favourite theme. He becomes, indeed, a very disturbing Bunyan, with much to say on matters quite other than Justification by Faith, and on some matters which he believes to be beyond justification at all. There must be a thoroughgoing honesty and not the kind that "wears two vizards," one for appearance before men and another for "a short snatch in a corner." In his *Badman* he lays it down that in commercial dealings a man should design his neighbour's good and profit as his own, and the theory that a man has the right to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest is dismissed as contrary to the New Testament. It is a maxim, he holds, that opens the

door to trading upon the ignorance, necessity and cupidity of the public. "Every man that makes a prey of his advantage upon his neighbour's necessities to force upon him more than in reason and conscience, according to the present prices of things, such commodity is worth, may very well be called an extortioner, and judged for one that hath no inheritance in the Kingdom of God." The same applies to buying. "No man may always buy as cheap as he can, but must also use good conscience in buying."

He is hot against those who would rig the markets, crying out "Scarcity! Scarcity!" beyond the true state of things; "especially take heed of doing this by way of a prognostic for days to come." Unscrupulous hucksters who sell at a "stinging rate" come under his lash: "Your hucksters that buy up the poor man's victuals by wholesale, and sell it to him again for unreasonable gains by retail, and as we call it by piecemeal; they are got into a way, after a stinging rate, to play their game upon such by extortion. I mean such who buy up butter, cheese, eggs, bacon, etc., by wholesale, and sell it again, as they call it, by pennyworths, two pennyworths, a halfpennyworth, or the like, to the poor, all the week after the market is past"; and he has no mercy upon extortionate moneylenders: "What would you say if I should anatomize some of those vile wretches called pawnbrokers, that lend money and goods to poor people, who are by necessity forced to such inconvenience; and will make by

one trick or other, the interest of what they so lend amount to thirty, forty, yea sometimes fifty pound by the year, notwithstanding the principal is secured . . . ? Say! Why, such miscreants are the pest and vermin of the commonwealth, not fit for the society of men." He anticipates criticism for not sticking to the simple Gospel. "Perhaps some will find fault for my meddling with other folks' matters, and for my thus prying into the secrets of their iniquity. But to such I would say, since such actions are evil, it is time they were hissed out of the world." No doubt, there was nothing new in all this, nothing that is not to be found in principle in Bullinger's *Decades*, written a hundred years earlier; but it shows us a very solid and downright Bunyan.

Withal, he sees no remedy in outward ameliorations that have not a genuine reforming conscience at the core of them. It is incident to men, he observes, to take up with such notions of deliverance as promise to get them off cheaply without inward discipline, and thus angry malcontents must seek to flaming revolutionary schemes like flies that cannot leave the candle till they are scathed: but the great need in England is a New Testament reformation from the soul outward. He sees no use in beginning by vehemently repenting of other people's sins. "To rail sin down, to cry it down, to pray kings and parliaments to put it down," this is always the easier line of things with which to make a beginning; but first things must come first. "Sin must be

overcome with good at home before thy good can get forth of doors to overcome evil abroad." Yet, given this first necessity, the civil power has its reforming function. The forces of law and civil polity are no more, indeed, than the dogs that eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of Christ, but these dogs, also, He knows how to employ for the hounding of abuses from the Earth.

This, then, as Bunyan sees it, a man can do. He can witness a good confession. He can be diligent to make his calling and election sure. He can labour for the salvation of men and for the building of that Living Temple which is the true Church, holding in itself the promise of the City of God. And in the midst of present disorders and perplexities he can stand for a Gospel conscience and help to "hiss out of the world" the iniquity of the times.

Perhaps we need not wonder that so much of this actual Bunyan has come to be obscured. The Bunyan who must proclaim a Holy City, descending from the spiritual heavens to be patiently actualized and built up, as from the Altar of faith and the Temple of a reconciling fellowship, into a new order, a divine commonwealth, visible in the midst of the earth—that Bunyan was presently lost to all sight and hearing in the babel of contending sects and the smoke and din of the industrial revolution. Simple folk cherished his dream of man's pilgrimage through

this world to the Celestial City; but that other pilgrimage and descent of the Celestial City to this vexed and tortured earth was hardly to be kept in mind. Other cities, descending from no Heaven, but rising out of the new Inferno of steam and machinery, came to claim their full attention. Yet, slowly, this forgotten Bunyan is emerging again. It may be a far cry from him to our gradually unfolding schemes of Christian union, to "Copec" and a new polity, but the route is direct enough.

ANOTHER note of the new and emancipated Bunyan is the note of song. Through sheer mirth of heart he began to turn his hand to the weaving of rhymes, producing his versified *Prison Meditations* (1663 ?). No publisher is ever likely to give us the Complete Poetical Works of John Bunyan, but at least the collection would make a volume of considerable bulk. No doubt, he came to fancy himself as something of a poet, and perhaps, when his pockets began to bulge with mountainous versifications upon Ebal and Gerizim and like ambitious themes, he became something of a trial to his friends. But Southey, who dismisses the entire output as "wretched," is by no means to be followed. There is originality even in his doggerel, and much of his verse is memorable. Admittedly verse was not his natural medium, but if he never soars, at least he dances. There is, indeed, about his rhymes a tinkle and jingle reminiscent of his trade, and some of the most characteristic of his lines suggest a sort of happy jig—the heel-drumming of the vacant rustic who hears music somewhere

and must step to it. So, at other times, he is content simply to tag, as it were, the laces of homely proverbs. But always his work bears the stamp of his own vigorous originality.

(1)

If for a moment we turn to his poetry in general we may take the simple piece which finds him a place in the *Oxford Book of Verse*—Christiana's song:

"Blest be the day that I began
A pilgrim for to be,
And blessed also be that man
That thereto movéd me.

"'Tis true, 'twas long ere I began
To seek to live for ever:
But now I run fast as I can:
'Tis better late than never."[1]

A better example is another of his Pilgrim songs —sadly altered and bled white in some of our modern versions:

"Who would true valour see
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather.
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.

[1] The line "'Tis better late than never" occurs in the verse of the elder Heywood (? 1546) and was probably proverbial before that.

"Who so beset him round
With dismal stories
Do but themselves confound;
His strength the more is.
No lion can him fright,
He'll with a giant fight,
But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim.

"Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
Can daunt his spirit;
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies fly away,
He'll fear not what men say,
He'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim."

Here, as Dr. John Brown points out, Bunyan's debt to Shakespeare is plain and pleasant. Evidently he knew the song in *As You Like It* (Act II, Sc. 5):

"Who doth ambition shun
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleas'd with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither;
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather."

Yet in the Pilgrim song the Shakespearean quality passes into something more rugged and entirely *Bunyan*. And who can miss the charm of the Song of the Shepherd Boy, which Mr. Great-heart heard with such enjoyment?—

"He that is down need fear no fall,[1]
He that is low no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

"I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much;
But Lord, contentment still I crave
Because thou savest such.

"Fulness to such a burden is
That go on pilgrimage;
Here little, and hereafter bliss
Is best from age to age."

He strikes a happy vein in his *Country Rhymes for Children*, brought out two years before his death. He complains in his rhymed introduction that preachers are apt to miss the mark with children by shooting over their heads:

"Wherefore, good reader, that I save them may,
I now with them the very dotterel play;
And since at gravity they make a tush
My very beard I cast behind a bush."

There follows a collection of whimsical verse (with morals duly attached)—Meditations upon an Egg, upon the Bee, upon a Candle, upon Whipping a Top, upon a Penny Loaf, a Looking-glass, a Frog, a Snail, the Cackling of a Hen, and much else: not altogether to the taste of modern

[1] Cf. Butler's *Hudibras*:
"I am not now in Fortune's power;
He that is down can fall no lower."
A piquant parallel, if the original of Hudibras was Bunyan's commanding officer during the war! (see pp. 57, 58).

boys and girls, perhaps, but likely to have sweetened the Sabbath for many a little Puritan. There is the poet's touch in the lines beginning :

> "A comely sight indeed it is to see
> A world of blossoms on an apple tree,"

and a Blake-like charm in "The Child with the Bird in the Bush" :

> "My little bird, how canst thou sit
> And sing amidst so many thorns ?
> Let me a hold upon thee get,
> My love with honour thee adorns.
>
> "Thou art at present little worth ;
> Five farthings none will give for thee ;
> But prythee, little bird, come forth ;
> Thou of more value art to me.
>
> "'Tis true, it is sunshine to-day ;
> To-morrow birds will have a storm.
> My pretty one, come thou away ;
> My bosom then shall keep thee warm.
>
> "Thou subject art to cold o' nights,
> When darkness is thy covering ;
> At days thy danger's great by kites ;
> How canst thou then sit there and sing ?
>
> "Thy food is scarce and scanty, too ;
> 'Tis worms and trash which thou dost eat ;
> Thy present state I pity do ;
> Come, I'll provide thee better meat.
>
> "I'll feed thee with white bread and milk,
> And sugar plums, if them thou crave.
> I'll cover thee with finest silk,
> That from the cold I may thee save.
>
> . . . . . .

"I'll keep thee safe from cat and cur;
No manner o' harm shall come to thee;
Yea, I will be thy succourer,
My bosom shall thy cabin be.

"But lo, behold, the bird is gone;
These charmings would not make her yield;
The child's left at the bush alone;
The bird flies yonder o'er the field."

So we have a quaint and vivid bit of description in his picture of the mortal duel between the Fly and the Candle. What ails this fly? Will she venture

"To clash at light? Away, thou silly fly!
Thus doing thou wilt burn thy wings and die.
But 'tis a folly her advice to give;
She'll kill the candle, or she will not live.
Slap, says she, at it! Then she makes retreat,
So wheels about, and doth her blows repeat"—

to the inevitable end! So, too, there is perfect simplicity and parabolic suggestiveness in "The Lark and the Fowler":

"Thou simple bird, what makes thee here to play?
Look, there's the fowler! prythee, come away.
Dost not behold the net? Look there, 'tis spread;
Venture a little further, thou art dead.
Is there not room enough in all the field
For thee to play in, but thou needs must yield
To the deceitful glitt'ring of a glass,
Plac'd betwixt nets to bring thy death to pass?
Bird, if thou art so much for dazzling light,
Look, there's the sun above thee; dart upright!
Thy nature is to soar up to the sky:
Why wilt thou come down to the nets and die?

Take no heed to the fowler's tempting call,—
This whistle he enchanteth birds withal;
Or if thou see'st a live bird in the net,
Believe she's there 'cause hence she cannot get.
Look how he tempteth thee with his decoy,
That he may rob thee of thy life, thy joy.
Come, prythee, bird, I prythee come away!
Why should this net thee take when 'scape thou may?
Hadst thou not wings, or were thy feathers pull'd,
Or wast thou blind, or fast asleep wert lull'd,
The case would somewhat alter, but for thee,
Thy eyes are ope, and thou hast wings to flee.
Remember that thy song is in thy rise,
Not in thy fall; earth's not thy paradise.
Keep up aloft, then, let thy circuits be
Above, where birds from fowlers' nets are free."

There is rude force, too, in his earlier lines (1664) descriptive of the Christian Warrior:

"This is the man death cannot kill,
For he hath put on arms;
Him sin nor Satan hath not skill
To hurt with all their charms.

"A helmet on his head doth stand,
A breastplate on his heart;
A shield also is in his hand,
That blunteth every dart.

"Truth girds him round the reins, also
His sword is on his thigh;
His feet in shoes of peace do go
The ways of purity.

"His heart it groaneth to the Lord,
Who hears him at his call,
And doth him help and strength afford
Wherewith he conquers all.

"Thus fortified, he keeps the field
While Death is gone and fled;
And then lies down upon his shield
Till Christ doth raise the dead."

We get him dancing in his russet and clogs in his lines light-heartedly repudiating the charge of plagiarism:

"Some say the Pilgrim's Progress is not mine
Insinuating as if I would shine
In name and fame by the worth of another,
Like some made rich by robbing of their brother.
Or that so fond am I of being sire,
I'll father bastards; or, if need require,
I'll tell a lie in print to get applause.
I scorn it: John such dirt-heap never was,
Since God converted him. Let this suffice
To show why I my Pilgrim patronize.
It came from mine own heart, so to my head
And thence into my fingers trickléd;
Then to my pen, from whence immediately
On paper I did dribble it daintily.
Manner and matter too was all mine own,
Nor was it unto any mortal known,
'Till I had done it. Nor did any then
By books, by wits, by tongues, or hand, or pen
Add five words to it, or write half a line
Thereof: the whole, and every whit, is mine.
. . . . . .
Witness my name, if anagram'd to thee,
The letters make *Nu hony in a B*."

(2)

But to return to the song of his imprisonment—here we have Bunyan celebrating his liberty of soul. He is in prison, he says, in body, but his mind is free:

"For though men keep my outward man
Within their locks and bars,
Yet by the faith of Christ I can
Mount higher than the stars.[1]

. . . . . .

"The prison very sweet to me
Hath been since I came here,
And so would also hanging be,
If God would there appear.

"Here dwells good conscience, also peace,
Here be my garments white;
Here, though in bonds, I have release
From guilt which else would bite.

"When they do talk of banishment,
Of death, or such like things,
Then to me God sends heart's content
That like a fountain springs.

. . . . . .

"If they do give me gall to drink
Then God doth sweet'ning cast
So much thereto that they can't think
How bravely it doth taste.

. . . . . .

"To them that here for evil lie
The place is comfortless,
But not to me, because that I
Lie here for righteousness.

"The *truth* and I were both here cast
Together, and we do
Lie arm in arm, and so hold fast
Each other; this is true.

"This gaol to us is as a hill
From whence we plainly see

[1] Cf. Lovelace (1618–58):
"Stone walls do not a prison make," etc.

Beyond this world, and take our fill
Of things that lasting be.

. . . . . .

"Here we can see how all men play
Their parts as on a stage,
How good men suffer for God's way,
And bad men at them rage.

"Here we can see who holds that ground
Which they in Scripture find;
Here see we also who turns round
Like weathercocks with wind.

. . . . . .

"These politicians that profest
For base and wordly ends,
Do now appear to us at best
But *Machiavilian* friends."

His sufferings mean no more than the piercing of the ear that is to wear the jewel:

"I am most free that men should see
A hole cut through mine ear,
If others will ascertain me
They'll hang a jewel there."

He draws to a close with rallying lines in praise of valour and the way of suffering:

"Hark yet again, you carnal men,
And hear what I shall say
In your own dialect, and then
I'll you no longer stay.

"You talk sometimes of valour much,
And count such bravely mann'd
That will not stick to have a touch
With any in the land."

But—

"Though you dare crack a coward's crown
Or quarrel for a pin,
You dare not on the wicked frown,
Nor speak against their sin.

. . . . . .

"The lubber knows not how to spring
The nimble footman's stage,
Neither can owls or jackdaws sing
If they were in the cage.

. . . . . .

"Know, then, true valour there doth dwell
Where men engage for God
Against the devil, death and hell,
And bear the wicked's rod.

"These be the men that God doth count
Of high and noble mind;
These be the men that do surmount
What you in nature find.

"First they do conquer their own hearts,
All worldly fears, and then
Also the devil's fiery darts
And persecuting men.

"They conquer when they thus do fall,
They kill when they do die:
They overcome then most of all,
And get the victory."

This is the characteristic conclusion, later to be paraphrased and expanded in his *Advice to Sufferers*.

WHILE Bunyan was thus languishing (vigorously) in Bedford gaol, much was happening outside. There were the Great Plague and the Great Fire, and the continuous plague and fire of nation-wide dissipation, controversy and persecution. As for the last, the sporadic and precautionary arrests, of which Bunyan was one of the earliest victims, developed, as we know, into an organized campaign for the destruction of Dissent. In Chamberlayne's *Angliæ Notitiæ* we get a fair sample of the bitter contempt for Nonconformity which now prevailed. Chamberlayne lumps together Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, with Ranters, Adamites, Antinomians, Familists, and the like, as belonging to persuasions not worthy to be described as religions: "for as the State of England doth account them no other members than the Pudenda of the Nation . . . so neither doth the Church of England look upon these Professors as Sons but Bastards, or make account of any other interest in them than a man makes of Vermin" (1674 Edition, First Part, p. 38), Even Clarendon, writing with the sobriety of an historian, could describe the "Noncon-

formist factions" as consisting of "glutinous materials" of "will and humour, folly and knavery, ambition and malice," needing to be "broken and subdued." For this work the forge-fires were ready, and the national and ecclesiastical stithies were not wanting for aproned smiths. By setting up the Book of Common Prayer as the rule of faith and order, the new Act of Uniformity framed by Kelynge (1661) made Nonconformists of one-fifth of the parochial clergy and secured their ejection. The Five Mile Act (1665) pursued them with proscriptions, forbidding them to teach in schools or settle within five miles of any city or corporation or of any parish where they had formerly ministered. The Conventicle Act (1664) reached beyond the nonconforming clergy to their flock, forbidding the public or private assembly of more than four persons for Nonconformist worship. These were the hammer-blows for the destruction of Dissent.

(1)

In Bedford Bunyan's friends were not likely to escape. They were, in fact, scattered hither and thither, plagued by informers and pursued with threats and writs. Here Lawyer Foster, noted earlier, comes into prominence as sedulous prosecutor. He had now every facility, Justices of the Peace having plenary power to convict without a jury.[1]

[1] Under the Conventicle Act offenders were subject to three months' imprisonment and a fine of five pounds, with a doubling

On the whole, perhaps, Foster found the imprisonment of his Bedford offenders less troublesome than the collecting of fines. As to this latter, Offor lets us see Foster's men at their work. Thus, on Sunday, May 15, 1670, the dwelling-house of "John Fen, haberdasher," one of the "ffenes" of the Bedford Meeting records, is raided; Fen and his friends are caught in the act of nonconforming worship and "forced to Mr. Foster's house"; there the preacher gets his mittimus to Bedford gaol and the rest are duly fined. Next Friday the Collector of fines, one Thomas Battison, a local churchwarden, makes a beginning at the malt-house of Brother John Bardolf, one of the faithful. Here, however, "a great number of all sorts of persons" very quickly assemble and there is some show of disorder. The crowd, it seems, "express their indignation," not over politely, some of the commoner sort going so far as to "covertly fix a Calvs tayl" to the appropriate quarter of the Collector's apparel, deriding him "with shouts and hollows."

The ill-used Battison, departing from the malt-house without his fine and with such dignity as could be recovered, heads the procession to Brother Covington's. This, we may take it, was the once-backsliding "Coventen," admonished to good purpose by Bunyan and seen to have been hopefully recovering (p. 129). Here again the

of the penalty for the second offence and banishment to the plantations for the third.

Collector is met with a refusal to pay, but this time he is not to be put off. His eye falls upon a " brass Kettle " in Mistress Covington's kitchen, and he orders his men to descend upon it ; who however, with a degree of firmness, indicate their unwillingness to be seen taking the Kettle into custody. The desperate officer is finally put to it to tip a boy sixpence to carry the confiscated property to a specified innyard ; " but when the youth had carried the Kettle to the Inn-gate (being hooted at all the way by the common spectators) the Inn-keeper would not suffer the Kettle "—and so forth at some length ; until presently we behold Battison constrained to perform his duties under military protection.

Perhaps poor Battison, with the " calf's tail " dangling behind him, was something of a symbol of the Cause he represented—daily losing in dignity and cutting a sorry figure in the country. No doubt the Dissenting resistance was of varied quality. Baxter, with whom the recollection of those times was too fresh and intimate for it to sublimate easily into a memory of pure heroism, thrusts in a splenetic-humorous comment. " While the danger and sufferings lay on the ministers alone, the people were very courageous, and exhorted them to stand it out and preach till they went to prison," but with the passsing of the Conventicle Act there came, he says, a certain " cautelousness," especially among the wealthier sort. Even so, there was a grim and obstinate persistency of resistance. The Dissenting folk

may have been slow, " cautelous " and stolid, but once set in motion they were apt to move forward, heavy and compact, mud and granite together, with the inevitability of a landslide. In this instance they moved forward with increasing mass and momentum—into gaol ; until at last the gaols were whelmed in their own commodity and were, so to say, swept into the general movement.

Moreover, there were complications. The authority of the national Church was weakened by the profligacy of the Court and the vagaries of the Government. Even Bunyan's religious devotion to his Prince must have been sadly strained. For it seemed as if the one political purpose which remained with Charles, and which he pursued with a wastrel's sedulousness, was to raise money and spend it before it was raised : for the rest, he passed from policy to policy as easily as from mistress to mistress. Thus the England which in the days of the Protectorate had stood level with the Catholic Powers, heeded in council, courted in peace, dreaded in war, was within a few disastrous years degraded to the rank of a minor principality. English sea-dogs for the first time in their history deserted to the enemy ; De Ruyter sailed up the Medway and burnt at his leisure the shipping in Chatham Docks ; Evelyn beheld the enemy fleet lying unchallenged and at ease in the mouth of the Thames—at this time quite toothless and slobbering—" as dreadful a spectacle as ever an Englishman saw." " People," says Pepys, " make

nothing of talking treason in the streets openly," and "everybody nowadays reflects upon Oliver and commends him,"—Oliver, however, being quite beyond recall, his bones lying dishonoured in that "deepe pitt" in the shadow of Tyburn.

It was at this stage that Charles concluded with the French king the secret Treaty of Dover; which, among its varied consequences, may be said to have brought Bunyan his liberty. The terms of the pact were simple. Charles was to support a Bourbon ascendancy in Europe and publicly declare himself under the Papal obedience. Louis was to secure him in an annual income and support him with French troops in the event of Protestant resistance. The plot, as we know, miscarried, but not before Charles had made the first move toward its execution—the Declaration of Indulgence of March, 1672, in which the Dover powder was concealed in the jam of a new and sweet toleration for Dissent. His Majesty's zeal for the national Church and for true religion had, it seems, been manifest to all his loving subjects, since "Our happy Restauracôn," by "the many and frequent wayes of Coercion" employed for reducing all erring and dissenting persons; albeit "the sad experience of twelve yeares" had shown "very Little fruite of all those forceable Courses"; so that the time had now come "for the quieting the Mindes of Our Good Subjects" and "the better Encouragement of all to a cheareful following of their Trade and Callings," by the suspension "of

all and all manner of Penall Lawes in matters Ecclesiasticall against whatsoever sort of Non-Conformists or Recusants." Thus, through the operation of "the worst act of the worst Government of modern times," the doors of Bedford gaol swung open and recusant John Bunyan passed out a free man.

(2)

Something like a popular triumph awaited Bunyan on the first Sabbath following his formal release. Two months earlier, in anticipation of coming events, the church at Bedford, and its associated congregations in the outlying villages, had called him to the pastorate. "At a full Assembly of the Church at Bedford the 21st of the 10th moneth [Dec. 31st, 1671, N.S.]: After much seeking God by prayer, and sober conference formerly had, the Congregation did at this meeting with joynt consent (signifyed by solemne lifting up of their hands) call forth and appoint our brother John Bunyan to the pastorall office or eldership." Our brother John Bunyan must have been present, for "he accepting thereof, gave up himself to serve Christ and His Church in that charge; and received of the Elders the right hand of fellowship." Before his release a barn in Mill Lane had been purchased for the church and duly licensed for congregational worship, and here Bunyan took his place on the appointed Sabbath.

Thanks to the contemporary chronicler who

supplied the biographical supplement to *Grace Abounding*, we are permitted a glimpse of the service on that day. He tells us that the "very spacious" building was crowded by "a great confluence of people," many no doubt coming in from Elstow, Hanes, Gamlingay and the neighbouring villages; many, also, quite unable to gain admittance at all, were "constrained to stay without," catching such wafts as they could of the preacher's voice in prayer and sermon.

We can imagine him well enough facing that overflowing "confluence of people," his tall figure in plain black garb, the aureole of red-brown hair touched already with silver, his sonorous voice (not, perhaps, without the Puritan nasal quality—still preserved for us, with other Puritan relics, in certain quarters of the English-speaking world) powerful as ever. His wife Elizabeth was there, we may be sure—in the fore-seats that day. Without evidence to the contrary we shall believe that Father Thomas Bunyan was there also—now in his seventieth year, still living in Elstow, and not without fatherly pride in Son John. Elizabeth, like Christiana, had brought the children with her: "blind child Mary," by this a woman of twenty-two, Elizabeth, two years younger, John, a youth in his teens (growing up to his father's trade of braziering), and second son Thomas. Sarah and Joseph, we believe, had not yet seen light of day.

Some present there must have been who remembered the preacher in his childhood and

reckless youth, many who knew him as a raw exhorter; and if here and there in the congregation there were tearful eyes that day, we need not be surprised. Singing, too, must have had its place in the day's solemnities—" psalms and hymns and spiritual songs " read out by the line and sung accordingly. Not all Puritan congregations took kindly to hymn-singing, but the Gifford tradition was not of the straiter sort, and we know that Bunyan favoured " spiritual songs " and could quote from his Sternhold-and-Hopkins.[1] We seem to hear the voice of his people lifted up that day, therefore, as if they sang both for the ear of Heaven and the duller hearing of Bedford :

" When that the Lord again his Sion had forth brought
From bondage great and also servitude extreme,
His work was such as did surmount man's heart and thought
So that we were much like to them that use to dream.
Our mouths they were with laughter filléd then,
And eke our tongues did show us joyful men."

(3)

Bunyan was now something of a national figure. In 1660 he had passed into Bedford gaol a callow gospeller still at the mercy of morbid doubts and dreads; he now emerged a man of composed judgment and settled faith, and an author whose books were in the hands of the multitude. We have some reflection of this calmer and more mature Bunyan in his " rules of life " as set forth

[1] Dr. Brown, however, shows that the practice of singing in Bunyan's church, as a part of the regular service, was debated in 1690 as either an innovation or a lapsed custom.

in later writings. "(1) Believe that thou wast not born for thyself; (2) Get thy heart tenderly affectioned with the welfare and prosperity of all things that bear the stamp and image of God; (3) Study thy own place and capacity that God hath put thee in in this world; (4) Make provision beforehand that when things present themselves thou mayest come up to a good performance; (5) Take heed of carnal reasonings, keep thy heart tender, set thy face like a flint for God; and (6) look well to the manner of every duty."

We may glance at his friend Charles Doe's list of Bunyan's output during those prison years, taking that list as supplemented by Dr. John Brown:

Profitable Meditations. 1661.
A Discourse on *Prayer.*
Christian Behaviour. 1663.
A Map of *Salvation* and *Damnation.*
The Four Last Things. (Verse.)
Mount Ebal and Gerizim. (Verse.)
Prison Meditations. (Verse.)
The Holy City. 1665.
The Resurrection of the Dead. 1665.
Grace Abounding. 1666.
A Defence of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith. 1672.
A Confession of Faith and Reason of My Practice. 1672.

It is to be observed in passing that after *Grace Abounding* there is an interval of six years with no recorded output. The list as a whole shows

us that through the years Bunyan had been finding himself and finding his message.

He now gave himself to his pastoral work and to occasional preaching itineraries. As to these, we find Leicester marked down in perhaps the earliest of them—in the autumn of the first year of freedom. We thought we caught sight of him in Leicester some quarter of a century earlier—as Centinel John Bunyan with his "brown matchlock on his shoulder"; now he goes into the city Records in different guise. We behold him in the town chambers, hat in hand, presenting his preacher's licence to Mr. Mayor (in Restoration peruke, doublet and frills), his gentlemen beside him. "John Bunyon's license," writes the official Leicester scribe of that time, "bears date the 15th of May, 1672, to teach as a congregational parson, being of that persuasion, in the house of Josias Roughed, Bedford [purchaser of the Mill Lane barn], or in any other place, room or house licensed by his Majestie. The said Bunyon [a pretty suggestion, here, for a municipal fresco !] showed his license to Mr. Mayor—Mr. Overinge, Mr. Freeman and Mr. Browne being then present—the 6th day of October, 1672" (Offor, Vol. III, p. xc.).

We gather that the house in which he preached on that occasion—opposite, or nearly opposite, St. Nicholas' Church—gave shelter in the following century to another parson likewise on a preaching itinerary and not altogether unknown to fame—John Wesley.

(4)

Besides pastoral work and preaching itineraries, Bunyan found himself involved in wordy warfare. An echo of this we find in a crude contemporary ballad :

> "There's a moderate Doctour at Cripplegate dwells,
> Whom Smythes, his curate, at trimming excells ;
> But Bunyan, a tinker, hath tickled his gills."

The "moderate Doctour" was Rev. Edward Fowler, rector of Northill, Bedfordshire, vicar of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, afterward Bishop of Gloucester. Fowler published a treatise, *The Design of Christianity*, in which he argues for a naturalistic philosophy of Grace. He is very un-Augustinian. There is such a thing, as he sees it, as natural soundness of soul. Reason and goodness are inherent in human nature, and Christ's mission was to discover man to himself and put him in possession of his powers. This pre-eminently is the design of Christianity—to quicken in man his potential righteousness ; and thus to describe saving faith as a recumbence upon the merits of Christ is wide of the mark. To do well is better than believing, and to imitate Christ's righteousness better than to repose upon it. As for Imputed Righteousness, it can consist only in God's dealing with *sincerely* righteous persons as if they were *perfectly* so.

We can see Bunyan, who had gone to school, not to Plato nor Pelagius but to Paul and Luther,

reading all this with growing heat, and feeling for his pen. A copy of the book had been brought to him during the last days of his imprisonment: within six weeks his *Defence of the Doctrine of Justification*, running into 40,000 words, was ready for the press. Even to-day, to disturb the embers of this controversy is to find a fire; in the first flame of it as it was then kindled we get a glimse of Bunyan, worth noting as we pass. It is an angry Bunyan. Dr. John Brown is constrained to admit that his hero deals "rather closely and not altogether fairly" with Fowler; nothing, says Macaulay, can justify the tinker's ferocity. Fowler, as Bunyan sees him, is "a learned and ignorant Nicodemus" and worse, a man of "unstable weathercock spirit," a "thief," an "angel of darkness." The fact is that Fowler, like the early Quakers before him, had found Bunyan's raw nerve. With all his native poetry and mysticism he will not trust himself away from the objective facts of redemption. To bid him explore the recesses of his soul and find potential salvation there is to fill him with rage and terror, to point him back to the mad, intolerable years when he "writhed and twined and twisted" in the toils of introspection.

Moreover, with all his abusiveness and ferocity, he is genuinely critical and incisive, cutting straight to the bone of Fowler's philosophy. What he sees, and says that he sees, is that according to this Cripplegate gospel the historic, objective faith becomes exiguous, a something in

the air, not to be distinguished from a sublimated Paganism. "The excellency that you have discoursed of is none other than the excellency and goodness that . . . in the first principles of it, is common to Heathens, Pagans, Turks, Infidels . . . a complexion or complication and combination of all the virtue of the soul, the human nature, the dictates of it, the principles of reason." *That* gospel he had faced before, or thought he had, and traced it to its source. "The tempter would also much assault me with this: How can you tell but that the Turks had as good Scriptures to prove their Mahomet the Saviour as we have to prove our Jesus is? And could I think that so many ten thousands, in so many countries and kingdoms, should be without the knowledge of the right way to heaven. . . . Every one doth think his own religion rightest, both Jews and Moors and Pagans." What, after all, if Christianity were but another variation of a universal moral philosophy—"but a think-so too"? (*Grace Abounding*, 97.) These suggestions, he tells us, did make such a seizure upon him and so overweigh his heart, "both with their number, continuance and fiery force," that from morning to night there was room for nothing else for a month together—until, in truth, he found himself like a screaming and kicking child "whom some gipsy hath by force took up under her apron and is carrying from friend and country." He thought he knew that Gipsy, and was not to be enticed under her apron again.

All this he now sets forth afresh, and in a style and diction very different from *Grace Abounding*, but breaking out now and then into recognizable *Bunyan*. "Let a man be as devout as is possible for the law and the holiness of the law; yet if the principles from which he acts be but the habit of soul, the purity (as he feigns) of his own nature, principles of natural reason, or the dictates of human nature,—all this is nothing else but the old gentleman in his holiday clothes; the old heart, the old spirit, the spirit of man, not the spirit of Christ, is here."

Fowler found time to answer him—anonymously, but, as it seems, through curate Smythes—with a pamphlet quite equal in ferocity to Bunyan's, and entitled *Dirt Wip'd Off*, being "a manifest discovery of the gross ignorance, erroneousness, and most unchristian spirit of one JOHN BUNYAN." Later, and in darker times, we shall get a glimpse of Fowler figuring to better advantage.

(5)

More hurtful was Bunyan's continued controversy with his Baptist brethren of the straiter sort—Brothers Kiffin, Paul, Danvers, Denne and others. Kiffin, at least, was no mean figure, and Macaulay, who finds room for him in the portrait-gallery of his *History of England*, is no doubt right in rating Kiffin's authority as a Baptist higher than Bunyan's. Over strictly Baptist societies as such Bunyan pretended to no

authority, but Kiffin was distinctively a separatist and leader of his party. He was a man of shrewd mind and high principle, a city merchant of large fortune and pastor of a "baptized congregation" in Devonshire Square. Judge Jeffreys counted him a man who deserved hanging—a certificate of merit of some weight.[1] Nothing divided Kiffin and Bunyan save the question of admitting non-Baptist Christians to Communion and church fellowship; but on this Kiffin, whose convictions seem to have led him out of a congregation which had admitted non-Baptists to its pulpit, was as adamant.

A man of different stamp was Henry Danvers, "joint-elder to a baptized congregation near Aldgate" and much given to controversy. Crosby describes him as coming of good family and inheriting "four hundred a year" (italicized). He appears to have taken up with Fifth Monarchy notions and the doctrines of John of Leyden. With Ferguson and his kind we find him figuring later—not to advantage—in the Monmouth rising. "Danvers," says Macaulay, "was hot-headed but fainthearted, constantly urged to the brink of danger by enthusiasm, and constantly stopped on that brink by cowardice."

[1] We have an instance of Kiffin's shrewdness when James II sought to him for a private loan of £40,000. Kiffin offered his humble duty, regretted he could not manage that sum, but would His Majesty be graciously pleased to accept the *gift* of £10,000? His Majesty was graciously pleased; "by which," said Kiffin, "I *saved* £30,000."

The "Mr. Lamb" upon whom Bunyan in this controversy will "not bestow paper and ink" because he has already "given his profession the lie" seems to be the "old friend" whom Baxter claims to have "had a hand in turning" from strict "Anabaptistry" and who later "fell on writing against separation more strongly than any of the conformable clergy." The correspondence between Lamb and Baxter appears in the earlier editions of the Autobiography (*Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, 1696. Appendix II). Bunyan would have agreed with Baxter's counsel: "Tell those [Strict Communion] Christians you will not cease to Love them by Loving more; nor cease any due Communion with them by having Communion with more; Keep in with them by Love and Correspondency even whether they will or no, even when you have left their Separation. Do not reproach them when you leave them, but enjoy the good of their Communion still, as you have Opportunity. God's House hath many Mansions; if your Friends think that their Closet is all the House, convince them of their mistake, and confine yourself to that Closet no longer, but yet renounce it not; it may be a part (though sinfully divided) though it be not the whole." The Mr. Denne whose way of life Bunyan likes not, was probably the son of the better-known and versatile Denne of Cambridgeshire. He reappears in Baptist annals in 1699 as author of a pleasant tractate, *Glad Tidings of Peace*, and then is seen no more.

These, then, were some of the brethren who pursued Bunyan, pelting him with the grotesque, abusive epithets of the times, challenging him to public debate, and bidding him interrogate his own heart if popularity and applause were not his snare to pervert the right ways of the Lord. Strung upon the few discoverable facts of their history, they caper briefly before us and subside; but to Bunyan at the time the controversy was no mere puppet-play. Opposition from without he could expect, but charges and reproaches from within the brotherhood wounded him. He was no despiser of ordinances. "Do you think," he asks, "that love-letters are not desired between lovers? Why, these God's ordinances, they are His love-letters and His love-tokens," more to be desired than gold, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. His sole contention was that they must not be "pressed out of their place" and made an occasion for division among the saints. But "Mr. William K[iffin], Mr. Thomas Paul, and Mr. Henry D'Anvers, and Mr. Denne fell with might and main upon me; some comparing me to the devil, others to a bedlam, others to a sot, and the like. . . . Nay, further, they began to cry out murder, as if I intended nothing less than to accuse them to the magistrate, and to render them incapable of a share in the commonwealth, when I only struck at their heart-breaking, church-rending principles and practice in their excluding their holy brethren's communion from them. . . . They also follow me with slanders and reproaches,

counting, it seems, such things arguments to defend themselves."

He is accused of "using the arguments of the Paedo-Baptist," and answers, "I ingenuously tell you, I know not what Paedo means, and how then should I know his arguments?" What he himself means, he knows, however, with some clarity. Railing for railing he will not render, and those who retain their sourness must be left "to the vinegar of their own spirits"; but for his part, writing not otherwise than as a Baptist, he is "for communion with saints because they are saints." "I say again, show me the man that is a visible believer, and that walketh with God, and though he differ with me about baptism, the doors of the church stand open for him, and all our heaven-born privileges, he shall be admitted to them." As for the nomenclature of the sects, he is resolved to have nothing to do with it. "I must tell you, I know none to whom that title [Baptist] is so proper as to the disciples of John. And since you would know by what name I would be distinguished from others, I tell you I would be, and I hope I am, a CHRISTIAN, and choose, if God should count me worthy, to be called a Christian, a Believer, or other such name as is approved by the Holy Ghost. And as for those factious titles of Anabaptists, Independents, Presbyterians, or the like, I conclude that they came neither from Jerusalem nor Antioch [where disciples were first called Christians] but" from a quarter far inferior and even infernal,

even "from Hell and Babylon, for they naturally tend to divisions." This is Bunyan, and we had better take him as we find him.

Thus having lustily laid about him, he quits the field and turns to more serviceable matters. But, like Great-heart, his sword is at command, and he must say as much as he takes his leave. "I am thine to serve thee, Christian, so long as I can look out at these eyes, that have had so much dirt thrown at them by many."

If pelted mud could have finally closed Bunyan's eyes—and mouth—his career would have ended in the months that were to follow.

(6)

Somewhere hard by Assault Lane, in *Pilgrim's Progress*, we have Giant Slay-good, who was of the nature of flesh-eaters, and picked the bones of unwary pilgrims. Only, Bunyan puts it into the mouth of Feeble-mind to note a certain limitation of Slay-good's power. "When he got me into his den, since I went not with him willingly, I believed I should come out alive again; for I have heard that not any pilgrim that is taken captive by violent hands, if he keeps heart-whole towards his Master, is by the laws of Providence, to die by the hand of the enemy." He should escape with life—that is, with his soul. Bunyan adds in the margin, "*Mark this.*" He had marked it for himself. In the year 1674 occurred the Agnes Beaumont incident, which, contemptible enough in itself, is significant, perhaps,

of the dangers of Bunyan's temperament and certainly of the malignity with which he was pursued. In an unwary moment he fell into the clutches of Slay-good.

The facts of the case as Offor states them (drawing upon James's *Abstract of God's Dealings with Agnes Beaumont*), and as Dr. John Brown further elucidates them, are dramatic enough—even melodramatic. A Puritan village maid, a stern father, an esurient suitor in the person of the family-lawyer, an uncompromising Puritan pastor who stands in the way of the match, the final refusal and the suitor's revenge—these are the materials for the strange story.

Agnes Beaumont, a girl of twenty-one, and a member of one of the rural congregations under Bunyan's charge, kept house for her father, a well-to-do widower living in Edworth, Bedfordshire. Suit was paid her by a local lawyer by the name of Farry (or Farrow), who engaged her father's interest and induced him to make over the bulk of his property to the girl. Puritan maidens, however, were expected to marry within the faith and Farry was very much a man of the world. Bunyan, either by general exhortation or direct pastoral counsel, opposed the match. Farry was rejected, and vowed vengeance. Beaumont, also, thwarted in his domestic plans, was inflamed against Bunyan and forbade Agnes' associating with the Bedford Meeting.

This was the situation when one winter's day Bunyan mounted horse to ride to Gamlingay,

within walking-distance of Edworth, to conduct a preaching-service. On the way he passed the house of Agnes' married brother who, with his wife, was riding pillion to the same meeting. Agnes was on the road, set upon going also, but disappointed of her means of conveyance and held up by the drifted snow. She entreated Bunyan to let her ride behind him. He objected : "Your father," he said, "will be grievous angry"; but in the end he was persuaded. On the road they met a local clergyman, who recognized them and was ready enough to raise "a vile report." Across the fields the elder Beaumont also seems to have espied them ; and Agnes, returning after the preaching, "wet with snow," found herself locked out of her father's house. She spent the night in the barn, where next morning her angry father found her, "the snow frozen to her shoes and garments." There was a stormy scene, and the girl was finally admitted to the house only on condition that she would go no more to meeting. That night her father was taken with a seizure. Agnes, alone with him in the house, ran barefoot through the snow to fetch her brother. When they reached the house Beaumont was dead.

In a rural community, divided as bitterly as any village on the Irish border in the grimmest days of the Ulster Covenant, the news was quickly on the tongues of gossips and scandal-mongers, and the malice which in earlier years could invent the tale that Bunyan was a high-

wayman or a Jesuit was ready enough to break out into new inventions now. But it was left for Farry himself to spread the diabolical report that "Agnes had poisoned her father and that Bunyan had given her the stuff to do it with; that it would be *petit treason* and that she must be burned." "Petit Treason," says Chamberlayne in his *Angliæ Notitiæ*, "is either when a Servant killeth his Master or Mistris, or a Wife killeth her Husband, or a Clergyman his Prelate to whom he oweth obedience; and for this Crime the Punishment is to be drawn and to be hanged. . . . The punyshment for a Woman convicted of High Treason or Petit Treason is all one, and that is to be drawn and burnt alive."

The story set the countryside in an uproar, Beaumont's funeral was postponed and a Coroner's inquest called. We shall not easily imagine what Bunyan must have passed through during those intervening days. He had long been a marked man. He knew the relentlessness of the enemy. He was full of sensibility. He knew himself the object of an active hatred which, if it could, would send him to the gallows, not as a heretic or seditionist, but as a criminal branded with the basest of crimes. He knew that a worse fate hung over the innocent girl. He knew that the winds of rumour were blowing the scandal far and wide and rolling out the cloud of suspicion and infamy over his family, his church, and the cause of religion. Something of all this Bunyan had to endure, and it was not in human nature that he

should pass through it unmoved. We can see now that for him this crisis and unsealing of the deeps meant presently a fresh up-burst of creative activity—sent him back to renew (as we shall see) his dream of the difficult pilgrimage, of encounters with giants, and the mortal perils which beset the unwary by the way ; but it was not for him to take comfort of it at the time.

As we know, the plot miserably collapsed. At the Coroner's inquest the medical evidence showed that Beaumont had died from natural causes, and Farry was able to produce no tittle of evidence for his charges. "You, sir," said the Coroner, "who have defamed this young woman in this public manner, endeavouring to take away her good name, yea, her life also, if you could, ought to make it your business now to establish her reputation . . . and if you were to give her five hundred pounds it would not make amends." For the rest, Bunyan found himself "stabbed broad awake." He looked anew to the buckling of his armour and took a fresh grip of his sword. If we may anticipate the suggestion of the next chapter, it was soon after this that he wrote in his Dream : "For such footmen as thee and I are, let us never desire "—like Job's war-horse— "to meet with an enemy, nor vaunt as if we could do better, when we hear of others that they have been foiled, nor be tickled at the thoughts of our own manhood, for such commonly come by the worst when tried. . . . When, therefore, we hear that such Robberies are done on the King's

High-way, two things become us to do: first, to go out Harnessed, and to be sure to take a Shield with us. . . . 'Tis good also that we desire of the King a Convoy, yea that he will go with us himself. . . . O my Brother, if he will but go along with us, what need we be afraid of ten thousands that shall set themselves against us, but without him, the proud helpers fall under the slain. I for my part have been in the fray before now, and though (through the goodness of him that is best) I am as you see, alive, yet I cannot boast of my manhood. Glad shall I be if I meet with no more such brunts, though I fear we are not got beyond all danger. However, since the Lion and the Bear hath not as yet devoured me, I hope God will also deliver us from the next uncircumcised Philistine." [1] It was probably at this time, too, that he inserted the fiery passage that appears in the later editions of *Grace Abounding*.

It began to be rumoured, he tells us, and reported "with the boldest confidence," that he "had his misses," yea, "two wives at once, and the like." What then, he asks, shall he say to those who have thus bespattered him? "Shall I chide them? Shall I flatter them? Shall I entreat them to hold their tongues? No, not I." But "when they have used the utmost of their endeavours, and made the fullest inquiry that they can," let them try to "prove against me truly that there is any woman in heaven or

[1] *Pilgrim's Progress:* First Part. Section beginning: "And I slept and dreamed again, and saw the same two Pilgrims," etc.

earth or hell that can say I have at any time, in any place, by day or night, so much as attempted to be naught with them." And does he speak thus to beg his enemies into a good esteem of him? Not he. "I will in this beg relief of no man." But, in short, "My foes have missed their mark in this their shooting at me. I am not the man. I wish that they themselves be guiltless. If all the fornicators and adulterers in England were hanged by the neck till they be dead, JOHN BUNYAN, the object of their envy, would be still alive and well. I know not whether there be such a thing as a woman breathing under the copes of the whole heaven, but by their apparel, their children, or by common fame, except my wife. . . . Nor am I afraid . . . knowing that I cannot offend the Lord in such a case, to call God for a record upon my soul, that in these things I am innocent. Not that I have been thus kept because of any goodness in me more than any other, but God has been merciful to me, and has kept me."

He was aroused, then. And it was with him as with Great-heart—a blow from the adversary served only to bring him to the full heat of his spirit. No doubt, also, he responded to the cordial of popular sympathy which marked his vindication. All that was necessary now for creative achievement was a season of comparative seclusion in which he might escape from the pressure of pastoral work and preaching itineraries. For this he had not long to wait.

In a later age, a considerate congregation would have voted him, after such an ordeal, an extended holiday on the Riviera : in this case, through the consideration of his enemies, he was provided once more with the seclusion of the local gaol.

For the relief furnished by the Declaration of Indulgence was short-lived. The arbitrariness of its formulation and its ill-concealed Romanist bias had strained the limits of the royal prerogative. An angry Parliament met in 1673 and secured the withdrawal of the Declaration. In March, 1675, a writ was issued against "one John Bunyon, Tynker," for having "in contempt of his Majesties good laws preached or teached at a Conventicle meeteing or assembly under colour or pretence of exercise of Religion." The writ was endorsed by no less than thirteen local Justices—a curious compliment to Bunyan,—among the signatories being Lawyer Foster, who was no doubt to the fore in the issuing of it. Thus sometime in that same year Bunyan found himself once more behind prison bars—this time in the town lock-up on the Bridge. We shall believe that he turned at once, and not without relief, to the work and projects of work that had been set aside under the pressure of those troubled and stressful years of liberty—to old notes and sketches and unfinished manuscripts of the Silver Street days. Now began the era of supreme achievement.

We may take it that Bunyan's final imprisonment lasted some six months, and we note it as marking, as we have said, the beginning of the era of supreme achievement. That is to say, it was at this time that the First Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* took finished form, to be followed in later years by *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680), *The Holy War* (1682) and the Second Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1685).

Concerning these, in which, with his *Grace Abounding*, Bunyan stands before us in the robes of his immortality, we need note in general no more than this: That Bunyan as Man of Letters is no other than Bunyan the sinner saved by abounding grace, no other than Bunyan the believer and gospeller. He may write the best of his books for diversion, but his diversion is inflamed with the dominant passion. Those of his books that live were born, not made, and born with great travail; the writing of them was no more than their swaddling, and an easy matter. *Grace Abounding* flows from his pen, and so does *Pilgrim's Progress*, but the heart-work that went

before was all but the death of him. It is out of his heart that he writes; every line and pen-stroke is honest, individual, true to himself; and though he must perturb the unco' solemn by his warm and boisterous humanity, he will have us understand that to read what he has written may be a matter of some moment for us, even of eternal moment. "Take heed," he warns us, "in playing with the outside of my Dream—put by the curtains, look within the veil." Let us, that is to say, understand what Man is, what Sin and Salvation are, what are the meanings which the world and life hold for us all. Divinely important is Man, not because he is an earth-child and creature of Time, with happiness that must be made up to him here or nowhere; but because he is the offspring of God, pilgrim of Eternity, coveted body and soul by the Devil, and succoured, beloved, redeemed by the Lord of Glory. Divinely important, too, is this Earth; not because it is—for us—the only world, but because it is *not so*; because it leads to another, concerning which we must choose now, under the sun and stars, whether it shall be for us a world of eternal blessedness or of fiery perdition. Eternally important, also, the World-Problem, which, beyond and underlying all passing problems of Monarchy, Republicanism, Rights of Parliament, is the Problem of Sin, never to be fully understood, never to be solved, except at the Cross, where the path of penitence and prayer opens into the way of holiness.

This is what Bunyan, in one way or another,

must always be declaring to us, and declaring with the passion of a saved soul. Was it not Coleridge who praised *Pilgrim's Progress* as being incomparably the best *Summa Theologiæ Evangelicæ* ever produced by a writer not miraculously inspired? "All the doctors of the Sorbonne could not have better stated the Gospel *medium* between Pelagianism and Antinomian-Solifidianism." Of those terms Bunyan might have said, as he said of *Paedo*, "I ingenuously tell you I do not know what they mean"; yet we shall not be disposed to dispute Coleridge's judgment. Bunyan must make unerringly for the valiant and practical truth. Faith, courage and a spotless life; a brave trust, a true aim and a steadfast pursuit of it against all odds—these are the first concern of man upon earth. Falls and "brunts" he shall meet with, and many adversaries; much to challenge him and nerve him to a manly and bracing *fear*; but "the will's all"—the will to believe, to strive, to fight, to fare forward, living for the eternal world that is in him and around him, and that shiningly awaits him through the grace of Him who is better than the best. This is Bunyan's Puritan and more-than-Puritan Gospel; very different, perhaps, from many gospels that engage us now, but likely for all that to outlive them, as it has already outlived many others, rationalist, æsthetic and otherwise, which have appeared and vanished between his day and ours.

One other thing we may note here. While

Bunyan was writing his Dream in the prison on the Bridge, Father Thomas Bunyan, over in Elstow, was completing his own earthly pilgrimage. He makes his last will and testament according to the true Bunyan tradition, "bequeathing" his "soul into the hands of Almighty God my Maker, hoping through the meritorious death and passion of Jesus Christ my only Saviour and Redeemer to receive pardon of my sins"; and leaving to "my Sonne John Bunyan one shilling," to Sonne Thomas and Daughter Mary a like sum, and the residue to Anne his wife "to doe with what she pleases" (Dr. John Brown's *Life*, chap. xiii).

(1)

Those who have a mind to date the beginning of the composition of *Pilgrim's Progress* have a pleasant task for their entertainment. Whenever it was begun, no masterpiece was ever flung off more light-heartedly. Bunyan tells us that he began to scribble it in vacant seasons for a pastime. He "set pen to paper with delight," and once the allegory was conceived the story unfolded itself: "for having now my method by the end, still as I pulled it came." In lines already quoted, and stitched in later years to his *Heavenly Footman*, he tells the story quaintly:

"Let this suffice
To show why I my Pilgrim patronize.
It came from mine own heart, so to my head,
And thence into my fingers trickléd;
Then to my pen, from whence immediately
On paper I did dribble it daintily."

We may compare this with his account of the more laboured composition of his *Holy City*, expanded from a prison sermon. "Methought the more I cast mine eye upon the whole discourse, the more I saw lie in it. Wherefore setting myself to a more narrow search, through frequent prayer to God, what first with doing, and then with undoing, and after that with doing again, I thus did finish it."

As for the date, before Dr. John Brown's authoritative work it was generally agreed that the First Part of the Dream was written during the long imprisonment, which ended in 1672. Dr. Brown, however, entirely satisfied himself that the allegory was not in Bunyan's mind before 1675, when he was confined in the lock-up on the Bridge. It is a matter of small moment, but Bunyan, in his Author's Apology, is at some pains to give us a broad clue:

> "Thus it was: I, writing of the Way
> And Race of saints in this our Gospel day,
> Fell suddenly into an Allegory
> About their journey, and the way to glory.
> In more than twenty things which I set down;
> This done I twenty more had in my crown.
> . . . . . .
> Nay, then, thought I, if that you breed so fast
> I'll put you by yourselves, lest you at last
> Should prove *ad infinitum* and eat out
> The book that I already am about."

This is Bunyan's own account of the origin of the Dream. He is writing, upon a time, of the *way* and *race* of the saints when he falls suddenly into

an allegory about their *journey*. This intruding figure of a journey, as distinct from a foot-race, becomes so insistent that it threatens to swallow up the other, and he is constrained to set it aside and finish his book as best he may.

Dr. Brown casts about for a book answering to this description as dealing with the way and race of saints, since to find it is to date the beginning of the Allegory. He concludes that it must be *The Strait Gate*, published in 1676. "No other book published during his long imprisonment, or for years after, at all meets the case. But this book does. . . ." It must be said with great respect that *The Strait Gate* in no sense meets the case. It does not treat of "the way and race of saints," nor do we find in it any trace of Bunyan's falling into an allegory of the Christian's "journey." Its theme (Luke xiii. 24) is the difficulty of salvation, and the one allegorical conception common to the *Pilgrim's Progress* is that of the Gate itself, which, though no "pinching wicket," is strait by reason of sin and the Law. However, the Strait Gate leads to no pilgrim way, but directly into the City. Offor, again, is no happier in supposing that Bunyan's lines have direct reference to *Grace Abounding*. The vital connection between the two books is clear, but to identify *Grace Abounding* with the allusion to a treatise on the way and race of saints, which slides into an allegory upon their journey, is wide of the mark.

The work which manifestly does meet the case

is Bunyan's *Heavenly Footman*, and the only conceivable reason why Bunyan's biographers and commentators have passed it by is that it was one of the ten or more treatises published posthumously, and that when it appeared it bore a rhymed advertisement attached to it by Bunyan in his last years, in which he refers to *Pilgrim's Progress* as already published, and claims that both his *Pilgrim* and his *Footman* are his own invention. But clearly this advertisement gives no indication of the date of the text itself.

The theme of the *Footman* is the Christian life conceived as a foot-race (1 Cor. ix. 24), and Bunyan sets himself to work out the idea of a race for a wager. "The prize is heaven, and if you will have it you must run for it." But very soon we find him tripped up in his figure and falling into a dissertation on the Christian's *journey* through this world. "Because the way is long (I speak metaphorically) and there is many a dirty step, many a high hill, much work to do, a wicked heart, world and devil to overcome; I say there are many steps to be taken by those that intend to be saved"—he adds "by *running* or *walking*," conscious that the new allegory is getting the better of him. This passage occurs within the first thousand words of the book, and from there onward we watch Bunyan struggling manfully to drive his tandem. "*Beware of by-paths, take heed that thou dost not turn into those lanes which lead out of the way*" is one direction; another, "*Take heed that you have not an ear open*

to every one that calleth after you as you are on your journey"; a third, "*The Cross is the standing way-mark by which all they that go to glory must pass by.*" Bunyan is well away. He has "fallen into an allegory" which bids fair to "eat out" his book on the heavenly foot-race. We observe him presently detaching his Pilgrim figure and finishing his theme with some abruptness, as if he had lost zest of it and were in a hurry to be done. In short, as we read *The Heavenly Footman* we do actually see the process which Bunyan has described. We are conscious of having opened a door which leads us into the birth-chamber of "the immortal allegory."

The question remains: What was the probable date of the *Footman*? We get some help from the text. Early in the treatise he writes: "I have observed, that little time that I have been a professor [i.e. a professing Christian] that there is a great running to and fro." . . . The phrase "that little time that I have been a professor" is more in keeping with the younger Bunyan of the long imprisonment than with the Bunyan of 1675. He adds, "Do not have too much company with some Anabaptists, though I go under that name myself." After the public controversy with Kiffin, Danvers and others, in which he expressly repudiated the title "Baptist," he would be less likely to write that he "went under that name." Toward the end of the treatise he recommends his readers to turn to his *Sighs from Hell*, "which I wish thee to read seriously over." His *Sighs*

from Hell, or Groans of a Damned Soul was written in 1658, and represents, as we have seen, the teaching of the earlier and cruder Bunyan. It seems unlikely that in his maturer years he would have singled out this book above all others.

To sum up: We may conjecture that after writing his *Grace Abounding* Bunyan begins his *Heavenly Footman* and so falls suddenly into his Pilgrim metaphor. He loses interest in the *Footman*, finishes it off, lays it aside, and turns with zest to developing his new allegory, which he carries forward as far as the Shepherd scene on the Delectable Mountains. Then, as he tells us, he "wakes from his dream."[1] This would be sometime between the years 1666 and 1672, years which we have already noted as showing no published output. Perhaps it is at this point that, "having put the ends together," he shows the rough draft of his Dream to his friends,

> "That I might see whether
> They would condemn them or them justify."

We know the result:

> "Some said, Let them live; some, Let them die.
> Some said, John, print it; others said, Not so.
> Some said, It might do good; others said, No"—

that deep sententious "No," rolling up out of cavernous and barren depths! He is thus, he tells us, in a strait, and cannot see what is best to be done. The manuscript is laid aside, together with the *Footman*—which he will not publish

[1] There is nothing in the literary form of the allegory to call for this break in the narrative.

forthwith, since it anticipates the new Allegory and discloses a rich mine which he wishes to open with his own pick. Then follow the Kiffin and Fowler controversies and the crowded years of liberty, too stressful and laborious for literary invention. Presently he "sleeps and dreams again"—that is, when the night of imprisonment again descends upon him in '75. So the First Part is finished, and all doubts are dismissed:

> "*At last* I thought: Since you are thus divided,
> I print it will; and so the case decided"—

very happily for us all, and in spite of the head-shakings of the dubious brethren.

(2)

We may note that what these dour critics saw in *Pilgrim's Progress*, and were disposed to disallow, was at least actually there. "Some," says Bunyan, "love not the method" of the book:

> "*Romance they count it,* throw't away as dust."

Romance they counted it, and romance it was—wedded to evangelicalism. Bunyan had, in fact, joined together what Puritanism had put asunder.

He is very light-hearted in his defence. It is all, he says, a question of taste. Some dislike cheese, some "start at pig" or "slight chicken"; so some have no relish for his method. But "men as high as trees" have employed it before him, and it is not to be ruled out because some have put it to unworthy uses.

> "If they abuse
> Truth, cursed be they; and the craft they use
> To that intent; but yet *let Truth be free*
> *To make her sallies* upon thee and me
> Which way it pleases God."

Let Truth be free to make her sallies! Music or Romance or whatever it be, if it be a fair medium for Truth, it must have right of way. This, it seems, is Bunyan's principle,—a far-reaching and, for Puritanism, even a revolutionary one.

As for the form and plot of the story no originality can be claimed for it. A pilgrim, a point of departure, a destination, the intervening journey, the meeting with fellow-pilgrims, their discourse and adventures by the way, their final happy arrival—these wine-skins were old as Chaucer; it is the wine that is new. The employment of the story for evangelical allegory is original, and distinctively this also—that in Bunyan's narrative it is the plain people who are set before us, and set before us not for relief and diversion but as objects of tremendous interest in themselves. Hitherto, princes and princesses, lords and ladies, priests and gentry, had been held the proper subjects for romance. So Bunyan notes in his rhymed preface to the *Holy War*:

> "Of stories I well know there's divers sorts,
> Some foreign, some domestic, and reports
> . . . . . .
> Of men, of laws, of countries and of kings."

He adds, "But, readers, I have somewhat else to do." In his Dream that "somewhat else" is to collect the plain Bedford burghers as they sit in their shops or pass along the cobbled streets or trudge the rutted roads around Elstow and Gamlingay and Hanes, and bid us mark their walk and talk and character. These, too, my masters (he is saying to us at every turn)—these, too, although disguised in russet and homespun, are eternally important—immortals in very truth, with exploits to achieve, Giants, Dragons, and grim foes to encounter, perilous ways to tread, no less than your Sir Bevis or St. George; and awaiting them at the end, according to the part they have played of valour or of treason, a City shining as the sun or a habitation of dreadful night! Thus it is with them, my masters, and thus it is with you and me.—This is Bunyan's new wine—new, and yet old as the Parables of Christ.

It is not for us to enlarge upon this at any length: for who is so familiar with it all—the nervous, homely dialogue, the deft delineation, the variety of human types, the wealth of humour, satire, pathos and compassion—as to fail to see that Bunyan, among other things of yet greater import, is the first of our modern novelists? Not Dickens himself, within a like compass, will give us a richer gallery of living, unforgettable types. Moreover, Bunyan's creatures are characters not caricatures, originals not actors. Often they pass swiftly across the page and we have them

before us for no more than the length of the printed line ; but we know them for living men.

Poor Mr. Feeble-mind is a sickly man with a whitely look and a cast in his eye, and comes from the town of Stupidity, four degrees north of Destruction. He would (though he may but *crawl*, and has to be carried up Hill Difficulty) spend his life in the pilgrim way. His speech is the speech of an invalid—a curious mingling of plaintive gratitude and self-pity. " I have found much Relief from Pilgrims, tho' none was willing to go as softly as I am forced to do. . . . They bid me be of good Cheer, and said that it was the will of their Lord that Comfort should be given to the *feeble-minded*, and so went on their *own* pace." For contrast we have Mr. Valiant-for-Truth whom we first meet with his sword drawn and his face all bloody after an encounter with a thieving gang—" We fell to it, one against three, for the space of three hours." Great-heart visibly warms to his new acquaintance. " But here were great Odds," says he, and examines Valiant's sword, weighing it in his hand and regarding it with an expert's eye. " Ha ! " he exclaims (how eloquent that deep-chested *Ha !*) " it is a right Jerusalem blade." Valiant admits that it is so. Let a man have one of these Blades, with a Hand to wield it and skill to use it, and he may venture upon an Angel with it. But Great-heart's mind is still upon the fight itself. " But you fought a great while, I wonder you was not weary ? " " I fought," says Valiant,

" till my Sword did cleave to my hand ; and when they were joined together, as if a Sword grew out of my Arm, and when the Blood run thorow my Fingers, then I fought with most Courage." [1]

We have the portrait of Mr. Fearing, perfect in its contrastive light and shade. Mr. Fearing is uncle to Feeble-mind ; he has the family complexion (whitely) and even the tell-tale cast in the eye. He lies roaring at the Slough of Despond for a month together, fearing to cross ; yet " he wouldn't go back again neither." He crosses it at last, " one sunshine morning, I do not know how," but somehow can never quite get away from the distemper of it :—" he had, I think, a Slough of Despond *in his mind.*" It is his way to be much alone, yet he loves good talk, and often will get behind the chimney-settle to hear it. The curious thing is that we find him making no stick at all at the Hill Difficulty, nor do the lions make him afraid (" *his trouble was not about such things as those* "). As for the Valley of Humiliation, " I think there was a kind of Sympathy," says Great-heart, " between that Valley and him," and he goes down into it " as well as ever I saw a man in my life." The Valley of the Shadow puts him to it, and he is very pitiable (" Oh, the hobgoblins will have me ! the hobgoblins will have me ! ") ; but it is unusually

[1] The text quoted is Frowde's Cruickshank edition, which preserves to some extent Bunyan's orthographic mannerisms. As with Carlyle, to prune down Bunyan's capitals is to weaken the vigour and individuality of his style.

quiet as he passes through, perhaps because the enemies there had received a special check " not to meddle until Mr. Fearing was passed over it." At Vanity Fair he is a very fire-eater, his bold carriage putting even Great-heart to some trepidation :—" I thought he would have fought with all the men in the Fair : I feared there we should have been knock'd o' th' Head, so hot was he against their Fooleries." When he comes to the last River his fears are upon him again ; he will be " drowned for ever." But " here also I took notice of what was very remarkable : the water of that river was lower at this time than ever I saw it in all my life. So he went over at last not much above wet-shod "—with Mr. Great-heart, standing at the water's edge, calling cheerily across to him to wish him " a good reception above."

So we have Mr. By-ends (married to My Lady Feigning's daughter) from the town of Fair-speech, where he numbers among his kindred My Lord Turn-about, My Lord Time-server, Parson Two-tongues, Mr. Anything and others. By-ends became a gentleman of quality, yet his great-grandfather was but a waterman, *looking one way and rowing another*, and he himself got most of his estate by the same occupation. We shall not be able to miss even, at this date, the sting of that deft satire upon certain of the Restoration nobility.

So, too, we have Mr. Talkative of Prating Row, a tall man, and—like certain works of art—some-

thing more comely at a distance than at hand. He is very engaging company, ready to talk of the history or the mystery of things, of things heavenly or things earthly, things moral or things evangelical, things sacred or things profane, things past or things to come, things foreign or things at home, things more essential or things circumstantial—in short, of anything: for a man may learn (by talk) what it is to repent, to believe, to pray, to suffer. Withal, Talkative is a very churl at home, and worse than a Turk to trade with.—And who can forget the assemblage at Madam Wanton's Ball; or Mr. Legality, of very good name, from the *village* of Morality, *where there are houses now stand empty*, to be had at reasonable rates; or that eminent Restoration lady, Madam Bubble—a tall, comely dame, something of a swarthy complexion, with a great purse at her side and her hand often at it fingering her money, who speaks very smoothly also, and gives you a smile at the end of a sentence? Who can forget Mr. Ready-to-halt with his crutch, or Mr. Despondency and his daughter Miss Much-afraid, or the young woman whose "name was Dull"?

We shall not quarrel with Stevenson for his preference for the combats of Great-heart, but neither shall we give up the Restoration trial-scene in Vanity nor the perfect picture of bluff old Dr. Skill.[1] When young Matthew falls sick

[1] On this see Kerr Bain's *The People of the Pilgrimage*, Vol. II, Note D (p. 499).

the old doctor comes with commendable promptitude and goes at once to the bedside. After examining the patient he turns with professional abruptness to Matthew's mother, Christiana, and inquires: "What Diet has Matthew of late fed upon?" "Diet!" says Christiana, her mother-pride touched at once: "nothing but what is wholesome!" But Skill is not to be put off. "The boy has been tampering with something that lies in his Maw undigested and that will not away without means, and I tell you he must be purged or he will die." The anxious Christiana presently begins to weep—a scene which Skill stops at once. There is great to-do about getting the boy to take the physick. "Come, come," says Skill, "you must take it." Christiana with mother-guile tastes one of the pills with the tip of her tongue and pronounces it sweeter than honey, so the boy is persuaded. It removes the trouble, thereafter causing him to sleep and rest quietly and putting him into a fine heat and breathing sweat: "so in little time he got up, and walked about with a Staff and would go from Room to Room." The bluff old Doctor, the danger over, unbends, talks a while with Christiana, bids Matthew take heed about eating Beelzebub's green plums in future, kisses the family, and departs. It is the perfection of the allegory that we are apt to forget in all this that it is allegory at all.

There are other touches of domesticity. We have, for instance, the courtship of Mercy and

Mr. Brisk. Mr. Brisk, it seems, is a young man of some breeding, not without polite conformity to religion, but sticking for all that very close to the world. As for Mercy, she is of a fair countenance and therefore the more alluring. Mr. Brisk is greatly taken both with her charms and her industry, for he never finds her idle. "'I will warrant her a good Huswife,' quoth he." It is not until Mercy inquires about him of the young women at the Porter's Lodge that she learns his true character and decides that she will have done with him. How to break this to Brisk in a convenient and considerate way is a delicate problem, but Prudence gives sound advice. There needs no great discouragement to be given him; all Mercy needs to do is to continue as she has begun to work for the poor. "That," says Prudence, "will quickly cool his courage." "So the next time he comes he finds her at her old work of making things for the Poor. Then said he, 'What, always at it?' 'Yes,' said she, 'either for myself or for others.' 'And what canst thee *earn* a day?' quoth he. 'I do these things,' said she, 'that I may be Rich in good Works.' . . . 'Why prithee what dost thou with them?' said he. 'Cloath the naked,' said she. With that his Countenance fell. So he forbore to come at her again. And when he was asked the reason why, he said that Mercy was a pretty lass, but troubled with ill Conditions. Mercy, though she does not favour him, is plainly nettled when he ceases his attentions. "I

might a had Husbands afore now, tho' I spake not of it to any; but they were such as did not like my Conditions, though never did any of them find fault with my Person." Bunyan finds a good husband for Mercy before the end—in Matthew.

We have elements, too, that do not altogether consort with a rigid evangelicalism. We have the case of Mr. Honest. Great-heart (when the old Pilgrim, aroused from his sleep under the oak, stands to his guard and challenges all comers) takes him to his heart at once for "a cock of the right kind"; but the notable thing is that with all his hearty simplicity and lovableness, old Honest is not at all of the standard Puritan-evangelical type. He comes, like Fearing and Feeble-mind, from the town of Stupidity, "which lies more off the sun" than the City of Destruction. He is not set on pilgrimage by any alarums. He tells us simply that, far north though he was, the Sun had shone upon him—had warmed him, we may take it, for the venture. That is all; and of struggles and doubts, sloughs and ravines, downfalls and uplifts, he has nothing to say. And he is true to type to the last. Stevenson thinks it an astonishing touch that Mr. Valiant should say at the end, "My Sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my Pilgrimage, *and my Courage and Skill to him that can get it.*" But Honest is not less remote from the accepted evangelical conventions: "I Die but shall make no Will. As for my Honesty, it shall

go with me; let him that comes after be told of this." This is very frugal testimony, compared, for example, with Standfast's: yet Bunyan will leave us in no doubt that Honest makes a good end. The River, at his crossing, overflows its banks in some places, but Mr. Honest in his time has spoken to one Good-conscience to meet him there, the which he does, and lends him his hand, and so helps him over. Yet at the last we get the triumphant evangelical note. As he takes the River at the flood he cries, "*Grace Reigns!*" Perhaps "Mark Rutherford" supplies the right comment: "A very remarkable dying utterance" from one "with the arms of Good-conscience around him." But Bunyan lets us hear that cry with a purpose. He will have us know that it is all right with Mr. Honest.

Bunyan, too, allows Great-heart to drift into a perilously secular metaphor in his discourse upon Mr. Fearing's unhappy temperament. Some, he says, must *pipe*, but Mr. Fearing was one that played upon the *bass*, sounding the doleful sackbut. Still, "some say the Base is the Ground of Musick. The first string that the Musician usually touches is the Base, when he intends to put all in tune. God also plays upon this string first, when he sets the Soul in tune for himself." Bunyan has to thrust in some apology for this so secular analogy ("I make bold to talk thus Metaphorically, for the ripening of the Wits of young Readers, and because in the Book of the Revelations, the Saved are compared to a com-

pany of Musicians") ; but he is more daring elsewhere. After Great-heart has slain Despair there is a jocund scene. "Now Christiana, if need was, could play upon the Viol, and her Daughter[-in-law] Mercy upon the Lute ; so since they were so merry disposed, she plaid them a Lesson, and Ready-to-halt [of all people, but who more appropriate, when Despair is dead ?] would Dance. So he took Dispondency's Daughter, named Much-afraid, by the Hand, and to dancing they went in the Road. True, he could not dance without one Crutch in his Hand, but I promise you, he footed it well ; also the Girl was to be commended, for she answered the Musick handsomely."

Here Bunyan is irrepressible, and Puritan rigidities have to give way. The Dream, worked as it were into the crowded and formal canvas of Puritan literature, is like Da Vinci's angel painted into the corner of Verrochio's classic picture,—the herald angel, as we see now, of a new manner and a new age.

(3)

It has been left for that new age to invent against Bunyan a new criticism, far other than that levelled by his dour contemporaries. His Pilgrim, it seems, is the Religious Egoist *par excellence*. He flees from the City of Destruction when it had been nobler had he remained in it and sought to better it. He is concerned not at all with his citizenship in this world but only

with picking a safe way through it to make a good arrival in the next. And thus intent upon his own selfish security, he forsakes even his wife and children.

Now to criticize *Pilgrim's Progress* in this way is to pay Bunyan a singular compliment. It is to show that he has managed his allegory so realistically that his amateur critics have largely forgotten that it is an allegory. For obviously, to object to Christian's forsaking his starting-point is to disallow the figure of a pilgrimage altogether, while to suppose that the City of Destruction stands for an actual community which a man may stay in and reform is simply to be deceived by the vividness of Bunyan's symbolism. For it can seem an ignoble thing for Christian to forsake Destruction only if we forget that, like Darkland, Stupidity, Apostasy, Conceit, and other towns and regions in the story, it stands for a state of mind. The same applies to Christian's forsaking his wife and "sweet babes"—a heartless action for which his critics would have him summonsed. All that it denotes is that Christian has had a change of mind which his wife and children do not share. "He also set to talking to them again, but they began to be hardened; they also thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriages to him: sometimes they would deride, sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him: wherefore he began to retire himself to his chamber to pray for and pity them."

But more than this: those who criticize the Dream for its lack of a reforming concern for this world show themselves curiously negligent of the simple facts of the story. For it will be remembered that there was one town which no pilgrim on his pilgrimage could by any chance avoid, since he that would escape it must needs go out of the world itself. This was the ancient town of Vanity, famous for its Fair, which lasted the year round, and where were sold houses, lands, preferments, titles and the like. Here were Britain Row, the French Row, the Italian Row, the German Row, and so forth; and as in other fairs some one commodity is as the chief of all, so in this one, with all its merchandise, the wares of Rome were greatly promoted, "only our English nation and some others have taken a dislike thereat." That is to say, Vanity and its Fair stand for the existing order—for Bunyan's Europe.

The point is that here the Pilgrims' concern is not simply to get through the town as speedily as they may but to cry out against its abuses and to declare that the laws of Him whom they serve hold good here as everywhere. They do in fact create no small stir and are had up for trial as seditionists. Their defence is that they have set themselves only against those abuses in the Town which have themselves been set up against Him Who is higher than the highest; that they have uttered no word of sedition save that whatsoever rule or custom or people is flat against the Word of God is "diametrically opposed to

Christianity," and that such of the townsmen as have been won to their way have been turned only from worse to better. The defence is not considered satisfactory and Faithful pays the extreme penalty of treason.

Froude is very serious in his comment. He will have us remember that after all Faithful had come to Vanity to make a revolution—a revolution which was, no doubt, extremely desirable, but one which it was unreasonable to expect the constituted authorities to allow to go forward. For as a matter of fact " a form of society did for some purpose or other exist . . . it must defend itself or must cease to be, and it would not be expected to make no effort at self-preservation." This we must admit. But the point is that no reader of Bunyan's time could have missed the moral of the whole satire. European society, as Bunyan sees it, is largely an organized Vanity Fair with its " Jugglings, Cheats, Games, Plays, Fools, Apes, Knaves and Rogues, and that of every kind." The Puritan as Pilgrim of Eternity cannot avoid this Fair even if he would, nor has he any right to be indifferent to it. His very loyalty to the Eternal dictates a present duty. He must not let the Hate-goods and No-goods and Having-greedys of the Town browbeat him into silence but must set himself against whatsoever is flat against the rule of the Highest, and turn as many as possible to the true allegiance.

But more: in the Second Part of *Pilgrim's Progress* Bunyan must even torture his allegory

in order to emphasize those social and civic responsibilities to which his evangelical individualism is supposed to have blinded him. Thus he puts a hostel in the town of Vanity, kept by one Mnason, a Cyprusian disciple. Mr. Honest inquires of him if there are any store of good people living in Vanity, whereat Mr. Mnason sends for Mr. Contrite, Mr. Holy-man, Mr. Love-soul, Mr. Dare-not-lie, and Mr. Penitent. By all requirements of the allegory these men should have been pilgrims, but instead they are householders in Vanity, and the nucleus of a reforming minority. Moreover, the Town is actually being reformed. "How are your neighbours for quietness?" asks Honest, and gets the reply: "They are much more moderate now than formerly. You know how Christian and Faithful were used at our Town; but of late, I say, they have been far more moderate. I think the Blood of Faithful lieth with load upon them till now; for since they burned him they have been ashamed to burn any more. In those Days we were afraid to walk the Streets, but now we can shew our Heads. *Then* the name of a Professor was odious, *now*, specially in some parts of our Town (for you know our Town is large), Religion is counted Honourable." Thus Vanity itself, thanks to the Pilgrims, is slowly coming round to a better way, and Christiana is well content to match her sons to Mnason's daughters (good girls they were) and have them settle in the place; so that Christian's name was like to live in

Vanity. In short, Vanity itself, by a happy allegorical lapse, is seen well on the way toward becoming a Pilgrim City.

(4)

The truth is that we shall not be able to make a mean or a narrow book of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Curious attempts to improve upon it there have been. Was there not a brave anonymous scribe who as early as 1683 brought out his amended version of that "useful tract," endeavouring "to deliver the whole in such serious and spiritual phrases that may prevent that lightness and laughter," etc., and commending his book as an appropriate Funeral-gift "instead of rings, gloves, wine or biscuit"? And did not a later ingenious Editor introduce into the garden at the Wicket Gate a Baptistry, in which the burdened Pilgrim dips himself three times, "the which when he had done he was changed into another man," leaving his Burden behind him at the bottom of the well? All of which leaves us recalling John Wesley's comment upon the improvers of his hymns—"I desire they would not attempt to mend them: for really they are not able."

Bunyan's book is in fact too religious to be merely religionist, too big to be meanly sectarian, too honest to be ambiguously amiable, too full of natural gusts and sympathies to be wholly otherworldly, too practical to lack reforming zeal, too sane to be romantically Utopist, too Biblical and believing to be taken up with this world alone.

Bunyan must have elbow-room for heart and mind. To the crass orthodoxy of the world with its brittle, narrow dogmas of negation and materialism he must play the eternal heretic. This earth, as he sees it from his Bible observatory, is neither the goal of all desire nor a thing to be slighted and contemned. It is an isthmus, a travelling-ground, a bridge swung between two eternities. And a bridge is not of less importance because it leads somewhither beyond itself, nor is a land to be thought the less of because through its dismal swamps and pleasant valleys and perilous dark ravines and over its delectable mountains runs a highway to another and better country. For Bunyan this is a brave earth, fit for heroes to live in—perhaps only for heroes; to be taken, that is, in the heroic and valiant way. It is a world for valour, for endurance, for the supreme quest of the soul that feels its own immortality and flings its purpose forward to ends which involve but transcend the bounds of time. Yet it is a world not for the strong alone. There is the heroism of the weak—the heroism of the Fearings and Feeble-minds and Ready-to-halts, for whom the Lord of all pilgrims has a tender regard. And he who would be a pilgrim need not fail for lack of guidance. Sure way-marks there are and a plain if difficult road. There are comrades, helpers, there is a shining light, a gate, hostels of refreshment by the way, the guide-post of the Cross set high for all pilgrim-eyes to see. Let a man make for that Cross and he shall

never more return with an easy heart to Darkland or Conceit or Destruction. At the Cross new empowerments shall visit him and the seal of the great Quest shall be set upon his forehead.

Here perhaps the saddest of all sad comments is "Mark Rutherford's." The leading thought of the Pilgrimage, he tells us, is the one which we find most difficult to make our own. We can follow the Pilgrim through the Valley of Humiliation, the Valley of the Shadow and Doubting Castle, but we are not sure, as Bunyan was sure, that the wayfarer will reach his Celestial City at last. He thinks that perhaps we may be permitted to say "almost in a whisper" that we cannot naturally rest in the sad conviction that in no sense is there any continuance for us: but that is all. Thus the whispered, wistful comment passes into silence. But still the reassuring voices of Great-heart and his friends seem to call to us, and the Pilgrims' chorus swells louder and more confident. With some other and very different Progress and Pilgrimage we may in these days be entertained, proceeding through much mud, indeed, and valleys of darkness and humiliation, but toward no Spiritual City, discernible or unapparent; instead, perhaps, toward brazen Babylons or inane Utopias where Man figures at last, replete and complacent, but without worship or the immortal hope, and therefore without sense of the supreme beatitude, the eternity of truth and love. Yet the older Dream of

this seventeenth-century working-man continues strangely to haunt the world, and bids fair to outlast many other dreams and schemes proclaimed in their day as the final wisdom. True Pilgrims may still be few on the earth, but the Age of Faith is not forever behind us. True Pilgrims may be few, but it is they who are the real representatives of Man, who must know himself at last as the wayfarer of eternity. This earth, too, he shall claim for the dominion of righteousness; he shall face Apollyon and contend mightily with gigantic evils; shall presently re-fashion even Vanity and its Fair, and make of them a holy city; but this he shall do for the sake of a Progress which is a pilgrimage of grace and of faith, and whose way leads beyond the frontiers and last River of time into the eternal light.

(5)

We pass, then, to a somewhat different study. Froude remarks that the allegory was the only form of imaginative fiction which Bunyan would not have considered trivial; yet we are to note that between the composition of the First and Second Parts of *Pilgrim's Progress* he gave himself to a realistic story innocent of all allegory—*The Life and Death of Mr. Badman.* It is clear that he intended it to be a sort of sequel or counterpart to the Dream. We have something like the *threat* of it in the lines that conclude Part I:

"What of my dross thou findest there, be bold
To throw away, but yet preserve the gold
What if my gold be wrappéd up in ore?
. . . . . .
But if thou shalt cast all away as vain,
I know not but 'twill make me dream again."

In his foreword to *Badman* he explains his intention: "As I was considering with myself what I had written concerning the Progress of the Pilgrim from this world to glory, and how it had been acceptable to many in this nation, it came again into my mind to write, as then of him that was going to heaven, so now of the life and death of the ungodly, and of the travel from this world to hell." However, the public, which accepted *Badman* on its merits but would not associate it with the Dream, showed a sound discrimination. The two works are not, indeed, to be mated. *Badman*, as the story of a middle-class seventeenth-century rascal, is a piece of naked and swarthy prose, marred, however, by irrelevant padding, and by one or two demented passages in which Bunyan too evidently sets himself to make our flesh creep. Withal it is a book which above all others echoes Bunyan's discursive talk and gives us his mind concerning the Restoration age; but in it we shall look in vain for the poetry and invention of the Dream.

Badman, having run through a graceless childhood and a dissolute youth, is set up in business by his too indulgent father. By his extravagance

and his wild ways he soon comes to the end of his tether and is hard put to it to keep out of prison. It is clear to Bunyan that Badman's father had done better by him had he let him pinch a little and go to journey-work to learn what a penny was by his earning of it; but from the first, as it seems, young Badman must live by his wits.

Thus he begins presently to cast about for a rich wife to get him out of his troubles, and it so happens that there is a young woman, an orphan, not far from where he lives, who is both godly and well-to-do. As for her godliness, he marks that for the baiting of his snare withal, and as for her fortune, he is resolved to get it by hook or by crook. So now, under the vizard of religion, and as if he were for godliness one of the best men in England, he offers love to her; and being of good appearance, tall and fair, with very good clothes on his back, and observing all his points (being an artist at dissembling), he makes a fair way with her. It would be his way to be regular at her place of worship and to present her with a good book or two, pretending how much profit he had got by them himself, as also to be often speaking well of godly ministers and the like, and telling of his own conversion: until, to be short, he gets his desire and marries her.

And now, having got his wife by religion, he puts it away as a thing out of use, frowns and glouts upon his wife's friends as if he abhorred the very sight of them, and shows himself the base fellow he is by spending his time and her money

with evil companions and drabs, even bringing them to his house to her great humiliation and grief. As for her, poor soul, he must even forbid her to go to a sermon or read a good book, and also he must threaten to turn informer and get her friends and her pastor in the hands of the law.

Seven children she bears this churl. One of them, to her great comfort, follows in her ways ; three take after their rogue of a father ; the rest are of a mongrel sort, not so bad as their father nor so good as their mother, but betwixt the two.

And now Mr. Badman must play a new prank. Having got his wife's money and seen to it that her portion has paid his former debts, he sets up again in business and drives a roaring trade, but in due time, by reason of his wicked excesses, runs again into debt : but not now to the count of ones and twos but of thousands. This time, however, he shows he has ways of his own to get money as well as lose it, and that by hatfuls at a time. That is to say, he shows that he has an art *to break*, and, being broke, to make a handsome gain out of it. For, having rioted through most of his wife's portion, he gives of a sudden a great rush into debt, blinding his creditors by driving at the same time a very great trade through selling under cost ; then he breaks, and sends mournful sugared letters to his creditors, pleading high taxes, bad times and the like, and desiring them to wait and he will pay all. Thus, through

his confederates, he propounds with them for five shillings in the pound ; the discharges are drawn, the books crossed, and Mr. Badman can put his head out-of-doors again,—a better man by several thousands of pounds than when he shut his shop.

This way of thieving and pocket-picking is altogether to Badman's bad mind, but he is up to other tricks besides. Thus he has one set of weights for his buying and a different set for his selling, and if he has to do business with other men's scales he knows how to get his point by sleight of hand. He has the art, too, to misreckon men in their accounts, and his servants are trained to swear to his book. Also, he will adulterate his goods, he will sell inferior commodities and book them at top prices, and he will scheme for a monopoly and then exact upon his customers and chapmen without conscience or pity.

Yet he is not allowed to go without a Providential pinch or two. For instance, in the midst of all this, it befalls him that, coming home drunk from the ale-house, and riding like a madman, he pitches from his horse and breaks a leg. This sobers him, and while the pain and danger of it are upon him he is even for praying to God. Yet his conscience is choked before his hurt is healed, and as he begins to mend he is soon at his old games ; his sluts call to see him in his own house and—as well as he can for his lame leg—he will show himself as vicious as they.

But then, soon afterward, he has another and

worse pinch ; for he has a fit of sickness, and this remaining upon him and growing worse he begins to bethink him he must die. Then his thoughts indeed are quite altered, as also his carriage to his poor wife. Now she is his good wife, his honest wife, his duck and dear and all. Now he will give heed to her and lie sighing while she talks to him. Now he will speak kindly to that child of his that favours its mother, though he could not abide it before. Now he will even show kindness to his wife's pastor and to godly ministers generally, and he will have no countenance for his old companions. In short it is presently noised abroad all over the town what a great and blessed change has been wrought in Mr. Badman. Yet no sooner does his distemper begin to abate than it is all over with his better thoughts, and as for his frights and fears, his doctor tells him that they all came from lightness of the head, the ill-humours of his body vapouring his brain ; so he never minds religion any more but is back again to his old ways.

And thus, this last trouble coming upon all the rest, his good wife's heart is broken and she falls into a pining sickness which carries her off. Indeed, as she draws near her end, Badman shows some kind of pity to her, and will ask her what she would have, and the like, but this too, as much to divert her talk from serious things as from any good feeling for her. After that, when she is dead and gone, and when the fit so takes him, he will talk of her and commend her even too extremely,

but he must soon leave off mourning, and falls into ways more villainous and abominable than ever.

But at last he gets his just deserts, for he is tricked into marriage by a cunning rogue of a woman who shows herself every whit a match for him, giving him curse for curse, blow for blow, trick for trick, keeping no more to home than he does, and whirling things about as well as he: so that now he bewails his first wife's death in very truth. But thus these two must live miserably and hellishly together some fourteen or sixteen years, and then, having sinned all away, they part as poor as howlets.

And so the time comes that Badman falls into his last sickness. He is not an old man nor naturally feeble, but now he moulters away, his cups and his queans telling the tale at last, and many diseases fastening upon him, with the consumption for the captain of them all.

Here, as we might suppose, is Bunyan's prepared-for opportunity to lead up to an evangelical *dénouement* with a lurid death-bed scene and piling up of horrors and agonies. But it is not so. Badman's illness runs its course. His old companions come to see him now and then, and he will stir himself up as much as may be to signify both by looks and speech that they are welcome, and his talk with them will turn on trades, houses, lands, great men, great titles and such-like. Also, some of his first wife's friends will come to talk with him now and again, but at the bare sight of

them his spirits fail, and when they rise to go he will scarce bid them drink, nor will he so much as say, "Thank you for your good company"; and he gets a haunt at last to have them told that he is asleep or so weak for the want of it that he cannot abide any noise.

Still, we would know of the end. "How was Badman," asks Attentive, "when he was at the grave's mouth?" "Why," says Wiseman, "there was not any other alteration in him than was made by his disease upon his body." But how did he die? We await the answer in a certain stillness; and we get it: *As quietly*, says Wiseman, *as a lamb.*

It is here, in the relentless and convincing realism of this last scene, in the restraint of it, and through its awful hush and finality, that we get a sense of the rolling of the distant thunder of Judgment, and get it more inevitably than in any lurid and crashing climax.

(6)

Here, indeed, we touch upon a difference between the work of this Puritan founder of modern romance and those who have followed in the "shrunk channel of a long descent." For we may believe that a modern treatment of the Badman theme would probably leave us with a sense of the futility of life, whereas what Bunyan leaves us with is a sense of the futility of sin. That is to say, a modern psychological novel with Badman or its central study would easily sag

into a muddy realism, become an end in itself, leaving us with a cynical disgust; in Bunyan's case the peculiar consideration is that, with his Puritan doctrine of depravity and perdition, he yet leaves us neither pessimistic nor cynical but aroused to a clean and salutary fear. Some one, indeed, may yet arise who shall show us that we have lost much of our disciplined resolution and declined into a languid weariness and distrust of existence because we have followed after a weak and amiable optimism and ceased to believe, as Puritanism so vigorously believed, in the Judgments of God. For is it not the sense that the moral universe will vindicate itself, and that Badman, impenitent, shall not escape his due reckoning, which redeems the whole story? The winds of judgment blow through it, and though the divine vindication is never more than in the background—as Waterloo is in the background of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, so that we hear only the distant boom of the guns—yet it is unescapably *there*. It belongs to our milder and inchoate religionism to hold by a comprehensive and relaxing Heaven which hangs sultrily above us as a final confusion and weariness. With Bunyan it is otherwise. He and his Puritans will have us understand that there are some facts of life which may be ultimately dealt with only in a terrible and fiery way, and it belongs to their Gospel to declare that in God's universe there are resources adequate even to this.

"Suppose that thou that livest and rollest in

thy sin, and that as yet hast known nothing but the pleasure thereof, shouldest by an angel be conveyed to some place where "—Dante-like—" thou mightest have a view of Heaven and Hell—wouldest thou choose to thyself thy former life? No; if belief of what thou sawest remained with thee, thou wouldest eat fire and brimstone first." This is Bunyan's funeral sermon over Badman; a fiery gospel, but at the heart of it a *gospel*, nevertheless.

For the rest: "Oh, that I could mourn for England!" with whom, except she repent, "the men of God's wrath" must surely deal. "Sin pulled angels out of heaven, pulls men down to hell, and overthroweth kingdoms. Who that sees the land invaded will not set the beacons on a flame?" "When," therefore, "we see sin a-swallowing up a nation, sinking of a nation, and bringing its inhabitants to temporal, spiritual and eternal ruin, shall we not cry out?" By this outcry Bunyan will at least deliver himself from the ruin of them that perish. "For a man can do no more in this matter—I mean a man in my capacity—than to detect and condemn the wickedness, warn the evil-doer of the judgment to come, and fly therefrom myself. But O that I might not only deliver myself . . .!" (The Author to the Reader: *Badman.*)

What he has written, then, he has written, and by help of God he will continue to pray that this flood of (Restoration) iniquity may abate in the land; "and could I but see the tops of the

mountains above it, I should think that these waters were " at last " abating."

As we know, those hopeful mountain-peaks were in the end to become visible to him, but not before a new and dreadful tempest and flood had first swept over his vexed and deluged England. And to this, leaving his *Holy War* unnoted, we must now turn.

The clouds of the new deluge began to thicken with the withdrawal of the Declaration of Indulgence. Vague efforts at Comprehension between the Prelacy and Dissent ended as usual in failure. Stillingfleet could maintain that "though the really conscientious nonconformist is justified in not worshipping after the prescribed forms of the Church of England, or rather would be criminal if he did so, yet he is not less criminal in setting up a separate assembly." Tillotson, preaching before the King (asleep, as the careful historian notes, throughout the discourse), must lay it down that "no man is obliged to preach against the religion of his country, though a false one, unless he has the power of working miracles." Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, said to have shown some kindness to Bunyan, had no better formula. *Afflictio dat intellectum* was Barlow's seasonable text. The laws against Dissent must be enforced, for whom the Church loveth she chasteneth. "I hope, indeed," replies Howe, "God will sanctify the affliction, which you give and procure them, to blessed purposes . . . but for the purposes your lordship seems to aim at I wonder

what you can expect. Can you by undoing men change the judgment of their conscience? Or if they should tell you, 'We do, indeed, in our consciences judge we shall greatly offend God by complying with your injunctions, but yet, to save being undone, we will do it,' will this qualify them for your communion?" But a Nonconformity thus dilemma'd, either in conforming or dissenting, with the inevitability of crime, or faced with the prior necessity of performing miracles, and withal afflicted for its own good, could hope for little in this present world.

In the midst of all this, in the midst, too, of Scottish upheavals, Drumclog and Bothwell Bridge, we have Louis divulging the secrets of the pact of Dover, Titus Oates unfolding his Popish Plot and Charles unearthing the Rye House conspiracy. Thus Bunyan's England, living in the mood of general consternation and bewilderment, passed from convulsion to convulsion.

The horror of those years we shall not easily realize now—the general confusion and suspicion, the coarse brutalities, public floggings, brandings, hangings, beheadings. Fear stalked abroad—fear of a new Bartholomew massacre (a roaring trade driven in leaden-thonged "Protestant flails" of defence), fear, also, of a new Puritan rebellion; the air thick with a pestilence of rumours, the tongues of informers everywhere busy, Tower Hill reeking with an orgy of executions. Charles must have wearied of signing death-warrants, and Burnet, preaching from the

text " Save me from the lion's mouth, thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorn," had some reason for hinting that the Lion and the Unicorn of the royal scutcheon were now become *rabid*. Withal, England's extremity was Charles' opportunity. There was now no organized opposition. Whiggery had gone to pieces, exploded with great uproar by the Rye House revelations. New charters were imposed upon the boroughs, and the corporations (which controlled Parliamentary representation) were remodelled on a Tory basis. In Bedford we see Paul Cobb (the same whom Bunyan would fain meet in Heaven) very active in this remodelling business and not without hope of a knighthood; very active, too (we may judge), the Chesters, Snaggs and Lawyer Fosters, renewing their zeal and hurling legal bolts. We get some picture of the rejoicings in Bedford town over the new charter, with later " gloutings " over the bills for " claret, sack and white wine," money for bell-ringers and fees for " all sorts of officials " (see Brown's *Life of Bunyan*, chap. xiv); some picture of it, too, no doubt, in Bunyan's *Holy War*, where the town of Mansoul goes through a like remodelling under Diabolus.

(1)

We get the temper of this last phase in the trial of Richard Baxter.

It may be true that there was in Baxter, with all his saintliness, a certain vein of folly. His restless mind could plunge him into " dis-

tinguishing" dissertations which were apt to make his championing of Dissenting principles a weariness, and in his (then) newly-published New Testament Paraphrase he had perhaps been needlessly provocative. Thus, to paraphrase a familiar Scripture into a warning against those who "for a pretence make long *liturgies*" was gratuitous. Yet no more venerable or pathetic figure could well have been thrust into the dock than this veteran chieftain of Dissent,—"learned and painful Mr. Baxter." "Painful" he was in very literal sense, his frail body racked with chronic maladies and further plagued with dreadful remedies—golden pills like musket-balls, "moss from a dead man's skull"; advanced in years, too, the "stuff of the tabernacle wearing thin," the inner flame shining as through a transparency.

For his trial we are shown the Guildhall packed with a mixed company, the curious, the hostile, the sympathetic, Conformist clergymen in their gowns, sombre-garbed Dissenting divines, numerous gentlefolk; the jury likewise *packed*. Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys takes the case, his eyes glaring, his face lurid, as usual, "with rage and brandy," his voice growling and bellowing—the reverberations of it still reaching us through the centuries. At this time he was five-and-thirty, with five more years to live, the seeds of death already secretly quickening within him.

Jeffreys' scornful "Oy, Oy's" and scurrilities roar through the hall from the outset. Baxter—defended by Pollexfen, Wallop and others, Whig

barristers of eminence—is "an old schismatical knave," an "old rogue," an "old villain," an "old stockole," a "fanatical dog," a "ringleader of whining hypocrites." Learned counsel are verbally boxed on the ears and roared down. "Pollexfen, I know you well enough, and I'll set a mark upon you, for you are the patron for the faction"; "Mr. Wallop, I observe you are in all these dirty causes. If you do not understand your duty better, I shall teach you." The Lord Chief Justice must further entertain the court with an imitation of the Puritan way of praying, snorting and clasping his hands, speaking through his nose, and showing the whites of his goggle eyes "in a mimical way." Baxter himself is quickly silenced. "Richard, Richard, dost thou think we'll hear thee poison the court? Richard, thou art an old fellow, an old knave. . . . Hadst thou been whipped out of thy writing-trade forty years ago it had been happy . . . but by the grace of God, I'll look after thee."

So the strange trial proceeds to its inevitable conclusion, some of the bystanders at last "bursting out a weeping," similar (suppressed) sounds coming even from the bench itself, to the right and left of personified Justice. "Snivelling calves!" says Jeffreys, turning "his wall-eyes hither and thither." The jury without retiring find the required verdict and Baxter is sentenced. "My Lord," says he, "there was once a Chief Justice who would have treated me very differently." No doubt the vision that for the moment took the

place of Jeffreys in Baxter's eyes, to fade again into the presence of the persecutor, was that of Matthew Hale, grave-faced and incorruptible, visibly bodying forth the dignity and authority of the law.

It may well have been, then, that even so stout a King's man as Bunyan must presently have been tempted to give up all hope of the Stuarts. *The Pilgrim's Progress* had described a senile Giant Pope, reduced to the employment of biting his nails; but when James II succeeded Charles the rites of Rome were revived at Westminster and Mass was performed "in regal splendour" in the presence of the Court. There were other and very different spectacles. The villain Oates was flogged through the streets with twice seventeen-hundred lashes of the hangman's whip. Dangerfield, similarly treated, and flung after his flogging into a hackney coach, was dealt a death-blow in the face by a man from the crowd. Monmouth, after his ill-starred rising, was butchered on the scaffold with Ketch's blunt axe, until even the brutalized mob yelled its execration. In the Western country the terror was at its height. Kirke turned Taunton into a shambles—his executioners ankle-deep in blood, the pitch-cauldrons (stoked by the poor Tom Boilmans of the day) full of rebel heads and limbs, embalmed for ghastly distribution through the countryside. Jeffreys, with his eternal lust for blood and butchery, could boast that he had hanged more traitors than all his predecessors together since the Conquest. Aged Dame Lisle, for sheltering

a fugitive or two, was sentenced to the stake (Pollexfen staining his record by standing as prosecuting counsel), but was granted the mercy of the axe. Elizabeth Gaunt, a Baptist woman, noted for her charity and good works, and betrayed by a fugitive turned informer, found no such clemency—was burned alive at Tyburn, the bystanders " bursting into tears " as she " calmly disposed the straw about her " for the shortening of her sufferings. Such was Bunyan's England.

Here, it may be noted, we see the last of Henry Danvers—eager a while ago to convict Bunyan of perverting the right ways of the Lord. " The craven Danvers at first excused his inaction by saying that he would not take up arms till Monmouth was proclaimed King, and when Monmouth had been proclaimed King, turned round and declared that good republicans were absolved from all engagements to a leader who had so shamefully broken faith "[1]—and so escaped to Holland.

Aged and venerable William Kiffin, too, had now other matters to engage him besides friend Bunyan's views on Water Baptism, the baptism of blood in the West having reached to his own household. He was the grandfather, as Macaulay reminds us, of the two Hewlings, " those gallant youths who, of all the victims of the Bloody Assizes, had been the most generally lamented." William and Benjamin Hewling, captured after Sedgemoor, had been arraigned before Jeffreys.

[1] Macaulay's *History*, Vol. I, chap. v, based upon Grey's Narrative; Ferguson's MS.

"You have a grandfather," said Jeffreys, "who deserves to be hanged as richly as you." William, aged nineteen, was hanged forthwith; Benjamin's case was referred to London. Kiffin's granddaughter went to Whitehall with a petition for his reprieve, and Churchill secured her audience of the King. The two stood together in the royal antechamber, Churchill with his hand upon the marble chimneypiece: "This marble," he said, "is not harder than the King." And so it proved. Benjamin followed his brother, dying "with dauntless courage, amidst lamentations in which the soldiers who kept guard round the gallows could not refrain from joining."

So, to take one more glimpse of the stricken Baptist preacher, we find Kiffin presently in "a brilliant circle of noblemen and gentlemen" assembled at the palace by royal command. James speaks to him "very graciously": "*I have put you down, Mr. Kiffin, for an Alderman of London.*" The eyes of the old man thus graciously favoured suddenly become stormy with tears, through which storm, however, they look, not without some suggestion of lightning, it may be, into the eyes of condescending Majesty: "*Sir, the death of my poor boys broke my heart. That wound is as fresh as ever. I shall carry it to my grave.*" His Majesty, it appears, stands silent a moment, betraying some signs of royal confusion, and then moves away from the lightning-zone with a word of gracious reassurance: "*Mr. Kiffin, I will find a balsam for that sore.*" The royal mind,

we are given to understand, was running upon the golden balsam of some monetary *solatium* for the young Hewlings' confiscated estates.

This, we say, was Bunyan's England during and after the Terror of '85 : inwardly, an England full of confusion and wrath, "the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear"; outwardly, also, full of strange sights and portents, the Western highways hideous with gibbeted corpses hanging in their chains, church steeples crowned with human heads, the arches of London Bridge similarly garnished—as if, as the historian says, it were not London but Dahomey.

(2)

Throughout this tribulation we find Bunyan holding to his work, though for a while his flock was once more driven into the wilderness. We have some tradition of his preaching itineraries. He preaches in a wood three miles from Hitchin, "standing in a pit or hollow, and the people round about on the sloping sides." Near by, in Bendish, we have a glimpse of him opening the Word in a certain thatched malt-house where there was "a high pew in which ministers sate out of sight of informers"—with a convenient exit into an adjacent lane, in case of alarm. Perhaps it is about this time that he journeys to Reading disguised in a carter's smock, "with a long whip in his hand"—to preach in a house whose backdoor opens on a bridge over "a

branch of the river Kennett, whereby " in case of need " they might escape."

In the year of the Terror we find him going up to London and preaching, " by stealth," in a private house. Charles Doe, a Southwark comb-manufacturer, later to go into the publishing business on Bunyan's account, and just now fined a matter of £280 for his conventicling ardour, contrives to hear him. " His text," says Doe, " was, ' The fears of the wicked shall come upon him, but the desires of the righteous shall be granted.' " Doe confides to us that he was a little offended at this text " because not a New Testament one." It seems he had suffered much under multitudinous dark discourses of Old Testament sort, and was now " very jealous of being cheated by men's sophisticating of Scripture," even as one " newly come into New Testament light in the love of God and the promises," and " having had enough for the present " of the historical and *doing-for-favour* Old Testament sermon. However, as the discourse proceeds the good Doe's feeling of offence quite melts away ; for " Mr. Bunyan went on and preached so New Testament like that he made me admire and weep for joy " and indeed love him then and there for a preacher after his own heart. Mr. Bunyan, he must add, was indeed " the first man that ever I heard preach to my new enlightened understanding and affections." (See Offor, Vol. III, p. cvii.) A transcript and enlargement of that same discourse we may turn to

still, in Offor's volumes, and follow, if we have a mind for it, the movement of that day's exposition, which wrought so memorably upon Brother Doe.

But what we have chiefly to note is, that throughout this time of tribulation, Bunyan's preaching and counsel and exhortation were, in Doe's telling phrase, altogether New Testament-like. And we have only to remember how altogether Old Testament-like were the scenes of blood and terror around him, how like the Old Testament tyrants and oppressors were the tyrants and oppressors of that day, and how Old Testament-like in their fierce wrath and hankering for the sword and for the day of reckoning were many of the martial saints and sufferers, also of that day —we have only to remember this, and to remember Bunyan's own hot and impetuous temper, to realize the restraint, the courage and the power of his witness as he moved about, disguised or undisguised, through his suffering and bewildered England. How many a grim Puritan was tempted in those days to feel toward his arrogant tormentors like G. W. Steevens' Marathites toward their Saxon lords: "*These people will all be damned while I am in heaven, and yet they rule me!*" But Bunyan is of a different spirit.

Sometime about 1684, before the Monmouth rising and the Bloody Assize, but not before the storm had burst upon Dissent, he issues his *Seasonable Counsel, or Advice to Sufferers*. There is, as we should expect, the old ringing note of valour. Never stick, says he, at the dark. "It is

most bravely done to resolve to serve God for nothing, rather than give out." We have a fore-echo, some hundred-and-sixty odd years in advance, of Mazzini's "Here in Rome we may not be moral mediocrities." Here in England, as Bunyan sees it, in this supreme hour, believing men must *rise to it.* "These days! these days are the days that do most aptly give an occasion to Christians, of any, to take the exactest measures and scantlings of ourselves." "Now it is *Christmas*, now it is Suffering-time, now we must keep holy-day every day"! All these terrors and tribulations are under the government of God; "He is the great Orderer." No need then for fluster: "We should stand like those that are next to angels, and tell the blind world who it is that is thus mounted upon his steed and that hath the clouds for the dust of his feet." We are "set upon a stage, as in a theatre, to play a part for God in the world." A trip on the stage is as bad as a fall in another place, and actors, *for the credit of their art*, and of their masters, and of themselves, are "bound to circumspection."

This is the great point. There is an art of suffering—that is, of suffering for righteousness. A man, of course, may suffer because he cannot help it—as the babes of Bethlehem did: but he may also suffer by choice, as Moses did. Suffering, again, may be undertaken through a variety or mixture of motives. It may be endured through bravado, or stoicism, "because of mere carnal stoutness of spirit," even "because of

hatred and a scorn to submit," or from fear of reproach for *not* suffering. A man may suffer in a rage, and "fight on his back" all the while. But this will not do. "*What will men say if you shrink and winch and take your sufferings unquietly, but that, if you yourselves were uppermost, you would persecute also?* Much more have they ground to say so when you will fight, lying on your backs." "Angry, waspish-spirited professors" who "know more of the Jewish than of the Christian religion" will not serve here. Revenge is of the flesh, *flowing from fear*; "there is nothing of greatness in it." "Even Julian the Apostate, when he had cast away whatever he could of Christ, had this remaining with him—that a Christian ought to take with patience what affliction fell upon him for his Master's sake." "He that saith in his heart, 'I will now commit my soul to God,' if he knows what he says, says thus: 'I am for holding on in a way of bearing my cross after Christ, though I come to the same end for so doing that He came to before me'"; and he who so determines is invincible—"overcome he doth, though he be killed."

So Bunyan must go on expounding his New Testament. Love your enemies. See good where others would see none. Pass by injuries which others would revenge. Return good for evil. "Learn to pity and bewail the condition of the enemy.—Never grudge them a present advantage.—Bless God that thy lot did fall on the other side.—Do this, I say, though they get

all and leave thee nothing but the shirt on thy back, the skin on thy bones, or a hole in the ground to be put in." "And be it so that thy pity and prayers can do [thine enemy] . . . no good, yet they must light some where, or return again, as ships come loaden from the Indies, full of blessings into thine own bosom." "Be quiet, then, and if thine enemy strike thee on one cheek, turn to him the other; and if he also revile and curse thee, down upon thy knees and pray for him. This is the way to convince thy observers. . . . 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' was one of those things that convinced the centurion that Jesus was a righteous man; for he stood by the cross to see how Jesus carried it in these His sufferings, as well as to see execution done."

This is Puritanism; it is even Ironsidism; but not wholly of the Cromwellian order; rather, of a sort older still, reaching back beyond Naseby to Nazareth.

(3)

For the rest, there is much solid common sense. He that would rightly suffer for righteousness, says Bunyan, must have, not only a good *cause*, but also a good *call*. That is to say, no man ought to run into suffering; it ought to be "cautiously took in hand." Preachers, who have a woe upon them if they preach not, "do, and ought more to expose themselves than other Christians." But not even preachers are bound to thrust their heads into the enemy's mouth.

"'If they persecute you in one city, flee to another.'" Paul escaped in a basket over the wall. Jesus withdrew Himself. "If they will not let me preach here, I will take up my Bible and be gone." He that flees has warrant to do so; he that stands has warrant to do so. But it is a sorry thing to flee "for the sake of a trade" or "for ease for the flesh." No true profit can come of *that*, either now or on Judgment Day. "Fly not of a slavish fear; stand not of a bravado. Do that thou dost in the fear of God."

So he will take leave of his brethren, his friends, his enemies and all men. Let them fear God, honour the King, and do that duty that is required of them by the Word and Law of Christ; and then, to say no more, they shall not suffer for evil-doing. It is given to magistrates to bear the sword, and "a command is to thee, if thy heart cannot acquiesce with all things, with meekness and patience to suffer" not as evil-doers but as doers of the Word. Let them, then, that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing as unto a faithful Creator. This is the word for the distressful hour. Goods have been confiscated, liberty put in irons, the neck put in the halter. So it is now. So it has been before. Bunyan puts the sum of the matter into bold type: "ALL IS GONE BUT THE SOUL." Even so: let them commit the keeping of *That* to God in well-doing. Apart from this there is no peace, no security "from the hand of Hell"; but here is security complete and eternal.

Before we turn to his last days we may cast one backward glance upon Bunyan in his homelier and more familiar colloquies. We may, indeed, regret that, unlike Martin Luther and Dr. Johnson, Bunyan has not come down to us in his private talk and his private correspondence. We may regret it because we can see, if only from what he himself has preserved for us of his dialogues with the Parson Lindales and Sir John Kelynges and Paul Cobbs of his day, that, though he was "not given to much discourse in company," he had a punctual wit and a ready tongue. And, indeed, the contemporary chronicler who records that Bunyan was not given to much discourse must add "unless some urgent occasion required it"; that is to say, unless he was aroused; when, it seems, his discourse could be energetic and expansive enough, accompanied by a certain lighting-up of the eyes which was quite memorable.

We gather that, unless thus aroused, Bunyan was content to be a good listener, holding his tongue in leash to a disciplined taciturnity. So

we have the tradition of a certain cottage in Wainwood where persecuted pastors would forgather by stealth and where "Bishop" Bunyan would be accorded his place of honour in the chimney-corner,—still remembered, it seems, as "Bunyan's seat." In this retreat, with the fire-logs smoking on the hearth and, no doubt, much tobacco-smoke also in evidence, there would be high discourse of the kind most to the heart of preachers in all ages. At one of these fraternal gatherings the discussion turns upon the right interpretation of Romans viii. 19–23. Each brother gives his version in turn, Brother Bunyan, however, remaining silent in his corner; until, upon appeal, he utters himself in six words: "*The Scripture is wiser than I.*" Strangely enough, those six words have come down to us as the only remembered contribution to that day's learned and pious conference; a contribution not greatly dissimilar, says Offor, to Dr. Luther's own comment upon the same passage, namely, "*The meaning of this Scripture I never could make out.*"

So, too, we have the retort from the pulpit-steps at Zoar meeting-house, London—a story which, as Southey says, authenticates itself. Here Mr. Bunyan, having preached "with peculiar warmth and enlargement" (somewhere about the site of the old Globe Theatre, where William Shakespeare, a while before, had also had his expansive times), is met by a brother who grasps him by the hand and tells him what a

sweet sermon he has delivered. "Ay," says Mr. Bunyan, "the Devil told me of that before I was out of the pulpit."

But though we have by direct record next to nothing of Bunyan's *colloquia mensalia*, his writings abound in such discursive allusion and anecdotal colloquy that we have much that might pass under the name of table-talk and which we may take as authentic echoes of his intimate conversation. And for the rest, as a crutch for our imagination, we have this: "His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. . . . I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. . . . There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large and . . . glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling and interest. . . . His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption . . . perfect firmness without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not speak *in malam partem* when I say I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station or information more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment."

This, we may take it, is as good a portrait of the fireside Bunyan as we need desire, for all that it is Walter Scott's well-known description of Robert Burns

(1)

Of course it is to *Grace Abounding* and to *Badman* that we must go, above all other writings, for Bunyan in his familiar talk and reminiscent asides; and *Grace Abounding*, at least, is a well-worked mine. We shall not forget, for instance, those narrow escapes which all but lost us our *Pilgrim's Progress* before Bunyan had set pen to paper. Once in his wild youth, he tells us, he fell into a creek of the sea and hardly escaped drowning—in Newport, perhaps, during his garrison days. Another time, "I fell out of a boat into Bedford river, but mercy yet preserved me alive." And then there was that third escape when his comrade, doing duty for him, was "shot into the head" with a musket-ball; and a fourth when he prises open the adder's jaws and plucks out what he takes to be its "sting." And who can forget his strange fear of the falling of the steeple bells? He chooses a safe place, presently, under a main beam, but imagination, picturing a bell falling "with a swing," chases him to the steeple-door, and then nudges him with the thought, "*How if the steeple itself should fall?*" and so puts him off it altogether. But we are less familiar with his story of the actual fall of a bell from that same steeple. "In our

town was one W.S., a man of a very wicked life, and he, when there seemed to be countenance given to it, would turn informer. Well, so he did; and was as diligent in his business as most of them could be; he would watch of nights, climb trees and range the woods of days, if possible to find out the meeters, for then they were forced to meet in the fields; yea, he would curse them bitterly"—until of a sudden, a stroke of judgment takes away his speech and he must needs go gruntling about like a hog or a bear; and after that, "he had a fall from the bell as it hangs in our steeple, which it was a wonder it did not kill him" (*Badman*).

It is in *Badman* that he tells us the story of poor Tod, which gave Browning the cue for his *Ned Bratts*. The Summer Assize is being held at Hertford, and the Judge is on the bench, when, of a sudden, in bursts poor old Tod, "clothed in a green suit, with his leathern girdle in his hand, his bosom open, and all on a dung sweat, as if he had run for his life"—when in truth he has been running for his *death*. "My lord," says he, "here is the veriest rogue that breathes upon the face of the earth. . . . My lord, there has not been a robbery committed these many years within so many miles of this place, but I have either been at it or privy to it." At this there is consternation in court, the poor breathless, vehement Tod thus interrupting the proceedings. "The fellow is mad," quoth the Judge, but presently he agrees to indict

him "of several felonious actions," to all of which poor Tod confesses with great heartiness, "and so was hanged, with his wife at the same time."

No wonder Browning could not rid his mind of this so vivid picture—this poor, half-crazed Tod in his ancient "green suit," torn open at the bosom, and within that bosom such powers of heaven and hell as all of us poor Tods must carry with us. We see him going his ways that day along the pleasant Hertford road, the midsummer sun shining down on him, the corn ripening in the fields, the larks singing overhead, the bees droning among the hedgerow flowers, but with that dread *uproaring* within him of conscience and remorse, as if all this midsummer scene were not for him; with something of love also vocal—his wife, we may suppose, being under indictment in Hertford gaol; so that he must turn him about toward Judge and gaol and gibbet and *run*, breathless and besweated, toward that ultimate goal—lest some afterthought should overtake him and thwart his expiatory purpose.

Bunyan must add something out of his personal experience. "While it is in my mind, I will tell you a story. When I was in prison there came a woman to me that was under a great deal of trouble. So I asked her, she being a stranger to me, what she had to say to me. She said she was afraid she should be damned. I asked her the cause of those fears. She told me that she had, some time since, lived with a shopkeeper at

Wellingborough and had robbed his box in the shop several times of money, to the value of more than now I will say. 'And pray,' says she, 'tell me what I shall do.'" (So we see Bunyan as father-confessor in this strange Nonconformist confessional in Bedford gaol.) "I told her I would have her go to her master and make him satisfaction. She said she was afraid . . . she doubted he would hang her"—doubted so not unreasonably, the noose-cord being conveniently within reach in those days: but her confessor is prepared with something more than heroic counsel. "I told her I would intercede for her life, and would make use of other friends to do the like: but she told me she durst not venture that. 'Well,' said I, 'shall I send to your master while you abide out of sight, and make your peace with him, before he sees you?' And with that I asked her her master's name. But all that she said in answer was, 'Pray let it alone till I come to you again.'" So the confession is broken off and this poor woman, with her inner torments, leaves Bedford prison and goes her way into the larger and darker prison which her accusing conscience has made for her, and never returns. "Away she went and neither told me her master's name nor her own." But Bunyan thinks she may have had it in her to be another poor Tod in the end.

What we notice in this story is Bunyan's method. "She said she was afraid she should be damned. I asked her the cause of those

fears." There was cause enough in the general teaching and gospelling of those times, but Bunyan is following his own method. "Christians," he says, "when they would comfort their dejected brethren talk too much at rovers or in generals; they should be more at the mark . . . that they may observe the cause and ground of their brother's trouble" (*The Work of Jesus Christ as an Advocate*).

He has other and less harrowing reminiscences, as, for instance, the story of the little girl with a taste for tobacco pipes. "I remember," he says in his *Acceptable Sacrifice*, "we had in our town some time since a little girl that loved to eat the heads of foul tobacco-pipes, and neither rod nor good words would reclaim her and make her leave them. So her father takes advice of a doctor to wean her from them, and it was this: 'Take,' saith he, 'a great many of the foulest tobacco-pipe heads you can get, and boil them in milk, and make a posset of that milk, and make your daughter drink the posset up'"—which he accordingly does, with success:—"she could never abide to meddle with tobacco-pipe heads any more."

(2)

We already know something of the story of poor Ned and his father, but here we shall let Bunyan tell it in his own way (as he puts it in the mouth of Mr. Attentive) and this not only because it is a perfect piece of Bunyan's colloquial prose

and something of a mirror of vulgar life in his day, but also because it is very much of a mirror of his own mind as to Satanic intrusions :

"About a bow-shot from where I once dwelt there was a blind ale-house, and the man that kept it had a son, whose name was Edward. This Edward was, as it were, a half fool, both in his words and his manner of behaviour. To this blind ale-house certain jovial companions [young and jovial John Bunyan amongst them ?] would once or twice a week come, and this Ned, for so they called him, his father would entertain his guests withal ; to wit, by calling for him to make them sport by his foolish words and gestures. So when these boon blades came to this man's house the father would call for Ned. Ned, therefore, would come forth ; and the villain was devilishly addicted to cursing, yea, to cursing his father and mother, and any one else that did cross him. And because, though he was a half fool, he saw that his practice was pleasing, he would do it with the more audaciousness.

"Well, when these brave fellows did come at their times to this tippling-house, as they call it, to fuddle and make merry, then must Ned be called out ; and because his father was best acquainted with Ned, and best knew how to provoke him, therefore he would usually ask him such questions, or command him such business, as would be sure to provoke him indeed. Then would he, after his foolish manner, curse his father most bitterly ; at which the old man would laugh, and so would the rest of the guests, as at that which pleased them best. . . . The curses wherewith this Ned did use to curse his father, and at which the old man would laugh, were these, and such like : 'The devil take you'—'the devil fetch you' : he would also wish him plagues and destructions many.

"Well, so it came to pass, through the righteous

judgment of God, that Ned's wishes and curses were in a little time fulfilled upon his father; for not many months passed between them after this manner, but the devil did indeed take him, possess him, and also in a few days carried him out of this world by death. I say Satan did take him and possess him; I mean so it was judged by those that knew him, and had to do with him in his lamentable condition. He could feel him like a live thing go up and down in his body; but when tormenting time was come . . . then he would lie like an hard bump in the soft place of his chest: I mean I saw it so, and so would rent and tear him and make him roar. . . .

"There was also one Freeman, who was more than an ordinary doctor, sent for, to cast out this devil; and I was there when he attempted to do it. The manner thereof was this: They had the possessed into an out-room and laid him on his belly upon a form, with his head hanging over the form's end. Then they bound him down thereto; which done, they set a pan of coals under his mouth and put something therein which made a great smoke; by this means, as it was said, to fetch out the devil. There, therefore, they kept the man till he was almost smothered in the smoke, but no devil came out of him; at which Freeman was somewhat abashed, the man greatly afflicted, and I made to go away wondering and fearing" (*Badman*).

So also he remembers having read "in Mr. Clarke's *Looking-glass for Sinners*" that upon a time a certain mad fellow boasted in his cups that there was no hereafter, neither heaven nor hell, and that for his part he would sell his soul to the first bidder. So he sells it to one of his tippling companions (for a cup of wine), and presently the Devil in shape of a man comes in and buys it of

that man at the same price; "and so, in the presence of them all, laid hold on the soul-seller and carried him away through the air, so that he was never more heard of." He remembers having seen worse accounts than this in Mr. Clarke's strange Looking-glass, and no doubt it would have been better if he had not looked into it, for in *Badman* we find his head very full of it, to the disfigurement of the book. In a sturdier mood we find him breaking out against superstitious dreads of "devils and witches" and "the foolish, ridiculous and apish fables that every old woman or atheistical fortune-teller has the face to drop before the soul" (*The Greatness of the Soul*). And indeed it needed no confirmation of Mr. Clarke's curious book to convince Bunyan of the actuality of the Devil. He had knowledge of him quite apart from Mr. Clarke. Visible or invisible, he was *there*, no mere rhetorical expression but an active Presence, very real in Bunyan's experience, and to be shunned, resisted, held at the sword-point of the Word of Truth.

(3)

And as for books and book-reading, Bunyan lets us see in his discursive talk that he must be reckoned among the few men of letters who have resisted the subtle seductiveness of a library. Thomas Hearne, the antiquary, enters in his diary (quoted by Dr. John Brown): "I heard Mr. Bagford, some time before he died, say that he walked once into the country on purpose to

see the study of John Bunyan [then living in a cottage in the main street of St. Cuthbert's parish, Bedford]. When he came, John received him very civilly and courteously; but his study consisted only of a Bible and a parcel of books, the *Pilgrim's Progress* chiefly, written by himself, all lying on a shelf or shelves" (*Life of Bunyan*, chap. xvi). But Bunyan is explicit. Beware, he says in his *Holy Life, the Beauty of Christianity*, of "the pride of a library." He goes on to tell us that in his judgment there are men, even great professors of piety, who "secretly please themselves to think it is known what a stock of books they have," and who "take more pleasure in the number of them than in the matter" they contain or the practical good they can get out of them. Nevertheless, from the days when he pored over "beastly romances," *Sir Bevis* and the like, on to the days when he read Dent's *Plain Man's Pathway* and Bailey's *Practice of Piety*, and then fell in with the Ranter's trash, to his great disturbance of mind, and after that to the time when Martin Luther's "comment on the Galatians" brought peace to his conscience and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* comforted him in prison, and Fowler's *Design of Christianity* stirred him to wrath and Clarke's *Looking-glass for Sinners* made his flesh creep, Bunyan was a close and retentive-minded reader of books. As to this we shall take one choice example.

"I will tell you a story," he says in his *Jerusalem Sinner Saved*, "which I have read of Martha and

Mary." The name of the book in which he read it he has forgot, and he asks our pardon if he come short in the re-telling of it since it is three or four and twenty years since he has had the book in his hand.

Martha, he remembers to have read, was much like Lazarus, her brother, and all for good sermons and lectures when she could come at them; but Mary was for the house of sports and worse, and had a disdain for her sister's preciseness, and though Martha would often entreat her, even with tears, to go with her to hear her preachers, still Mary would always make her excuses. But upon a time Jesus of Nazareth comes to Jerusalem, and Martha says, "Sister, I pray thee go with me to the Temple to-day to hear one preach a sermon." And this time she prevails. For "What kind of preacher is he?" says Mary; and upon that Martha draws such a picture of Jesus that her sister, for all her distaste for sermons, secretly takes the notion that she will go to see and hear Him. So what does she do, but after a little pause goes up to her room "and with her pins and her clouts, decks up herself as fine as her fingers could make her." This done, away she goes, not with her sister Martha, but as much unobserved as she could, to the sermon, or rather, to see the preacher.

"The hour and preacher being come, and she having observed whereabout the preacher would stand, she goes and sets herself so in the temple that she might be sure to have the full view" of

Him. "Now at that time, saith my author, Jesus preached about the lost sheep, the lost groat, and the prodigal child. And when he came to shew what care the shepherd took for one lost sheep, and how the woman swept to find her piece which was lost, and what joy there was at their finding, she began to be taken by the ears, and forgot what she came about, musing what the preacher would make of it. But when he came to the application, and shewed that by the lost sheep was meant a great sinner, by the shepherd's care was meant God's love for great sinners, and that by the joy of the neighbours was showed what joy there was among the angels in heaven over one great sinner that repenteth, she began to be taken by the heart. And as he spake these last words she thought he pitched his innocent eyes just upon her, and looked as if he spake what was now said to her: wherefore her heart began to tremble, being shaken with affection and fear; then her eyes ran down with tears apace; wherefore she was forced to hide her face with her handkerchief, and so sat sobbing and crying all the rest of the sermon"—and comes weeping at last to the preacher Himself.—And although Bunyan must ask our pardon if he has come short in any circumstance of the narration, we shall not believe that the story has lost anything in his re-telling of it.

(4)

Bunyan recollects that in this story one of the first acts of the now converted Mary was to change

her gay and wanton attire for a modest dress, and we can see that, far more than the pride of a library, the Restoration pride of dress was a matter which exercised him continually. What, he would know, can be the end of those that are so proud in the decking of themselves in this antic manner—this spangling show of fine clothes? Why are folk for going nowadays with their bull's foretops and naked shoulders and painted faces? Puritans did not escape the contagion. "For my own part, I have seen many myself, and those church members too, so decked and bedaubed with their fangles and toys, and that when they have been at the solemn appointments of God in the way of His worship, that I have wondered with what face such painted persons could sit in the place where they were without swooning." He recalls that he once took it upon him to "talk with a maid by way of reproof for her fond and gaudy garment. But she told me the tailor would make it so, when alas! poor, proud girl, she gave order to the tailor to so make it."

Altogether he is ill at ease about the condition of the Dissenting churches under the Restoration. This, indeed, is "a day that was never read of," a day wherein "conversion is frequent without repentance," so that the churches "swarm with them that religiously name the name of Christ but yet depart not from iniquity" (*A Holy Life*). There is "some kind of musicalness" in the Word, "especially when well handled and figured by a skilfull preacher," so that there is always a

hearing to be had; but, even so, he remarks a strange listlessness, and "the place of hearing is the place of sleeping with many a fine professor." "I have often observed that those that keep shops can briskly attend upon a two-penny customer, but when they come themselves to God's market they spend their time in a nasty, drowsy way." These lax, indifferent professors he must liken to the frogs of Egypt; they can live in the water and out of it; they are "very anythings." The heads of most hearers nowadays he finds to be mere sieves: "they can hold no sermons, remember no texts." As for public devotions, he shares Gifford's opinion that not every brother is qualified to be a mouth to the church. Men, he says, too often pray in public assemblies "for a show to be heard, and to be thought somebody in religion": they "eye only their auditory in their expressions," labour after "enlargements," and "look for commendation when they have done." "The length of their prayer pleaseth them, and that it might be long, they will vainly repeat things over and over" (*On Praying in the Spirit*). And as for private prayer,—"Surely, they that can scarce tie their shoes and their garters before they arrive at the tavern, or get to the coffee-house door in a morning, can scarce spare time to be a while in their closets with God. Morning closet-prayers are now by most London professors thrown away, and what kind of ones they make at night, God doth know. . . . However, I have cause as to this to

look at home, and God mend me and all his servants about it" (*A Case of Conscience Resolved*). In short "Did we but look back to the Puritans [he will not give that name to the Dissenters of the Restoration], but especially to those that, but a little before them, suffered for the Word of God in the Marian days, we should see another life!" "But this twenty years we have been degenerating, both as to principles and as to practice, and have grown at last into an amazing likeness to the world, both as to religion and civil demeanour."

Withal he reacts against an extreme Puritan narrowness. The saints, he complains, are often so unlovable, "they will mix their mercies with so many twits," whereas God gives without twitting. "Why not familiar with sinners, provided we hate their spots and blemishes and seek that they may be healed of them? Why not fellowly with our carnal neighbours" if we use the occasion to seek their good?

The Tory in him shows itself in his opposition to the growing activity of women in the Church. He objects to women's prayer meetings—that is, to women's meeting in church for prayer, "without their men." These "womanish" and, in fact, "nunnish" assemblies will not do. "Who knows not, that have their eyes in their heads, what already has, and what further may, come into the church at such a gap as this!" (*A Case of Conscience Resolved.*)

"WOMEN! they are an ornament in the Church of God on earth as the ANGELS are in the

Church in heaven," but, like the angels, they must keep their station ; and whilst in the Church as a Body Mystical there is no distinction of sex, this cannot hold true of the Church as a Body Politic. Moreover, there is danger from spiritual pride :—" I have wondered sometimes to see, when something extraordinary hath happened to the Church of God for good, that a few women meeting together to pray, should be possessed with a conceit that they fetched the benefit down from heaven." Bunyan is bound to think that " perhaps ten thousand men in the land prayed for the mercy as hard as they " ; but no : the sisters must hold " that their meeting together had done it." And this, again, will not do.

So, too, he is in arms against the modern—Restoration—laxity of family discipline. Children, indeed, are not to be treated harshly. " I tell you that if parents carry it lovingly towards their children, mixing their mercies with loving rebukes, and their loving rebukes with fatherly and motherly compassions, they are more likely to save their children than by being churlish and severe towards them " (*Badman*). But he is put out of all countenance by the manners of the modern child. " O ! it is horrible to behold how irreverently, how irrespectively, how saucily and malapertly children at this day carry it to their parents ; snapping and checking, curbing and rebuking of them . . . as if they had received a dispensation from God to dishonour and disobey their parents " (*A Holy Life*).

The reformer in him flames out, as we have seen, when he considers the lot of the poor. There are plenty of knaves, he says, who make a fair profession their cloak to be vile—slithy, rob-shop, pick-pocket folk who are a shame to religion and of whom religious men should be ashamed: yet their practices are as common as four-eggs-a-penny. "We have a great many people that live all their days in the practice, and so under the guilt of extortion; people, alas! that think scorn to be so accounted. As for example: There is a poor body that dwells, we will suppose, so many miles from the market; and this man wants a bushel of grist, a pound of butter, or a cheese, for himself, his wife and poor children; but dwelling so far from the market, if he goes thither he shall lose his day's work, which will be eightpence or tenpence damage to him, and that is something to a poor man. So he goeth to one of his masters or dames for what he wanteth, and asks them to help him with such a thing. 'Yes,' say they, 'you may have it'; but withal they will give him a gripe, perhaps make him pay as much or more for it at home as they can get when they have carried it five miles to a market; yea, and that, too, for the refuse of their commodity. . . . Now this is a kind of extortion; it is a making a prey of the necessity of the poor, it is a grinding of their faces, a buying and selling of them" (*Badman*).

Withal it is not in him to dwell on these things in the relapsing tone as if all were lost. Israel's

hope must be encouraged. Better times are coming. "Now you are concerned because times are so bad, but then you will be so because times are so good . . . for I dare say, could you see such days they would make you shout" (*Badman*). Great sinners, after all, are the stuff out of which great saints are made. "For my part I believe the time is at hand that we shall see better saints in the world than has been seen in it this many a day" (*Jerusalem Sinner Saved*).

(5)

For the rest, there is a section of his colloquies which, if we put upon it the name of "Table Talk" at all, we must think of as his Talk at his Master's own Table,—so deep and rich is it, and so full of the spirit of devotion. Upon this we shall not dwell, for in one way or another we have drawn upon it in former chapters. Only we shall listen to him as he tells us of his preaching.

"I have been in my preaching, especially when I have been engaged in the doctrine of life by Christ, without works, as if an angel of God had stood by at my back to encourage me. Oh, it hath been with such power and heavenly evidence upon my own soul, while I have been labouring to unfold it, to demonstrate it, and to fasten it upon the conscience of others, that I could not be contented with saying, 'I believe and am sure'; methought I was more than sure" (*Grace Abounding*). And again: "In my preaching I have really been in pain, and have, as it were, travailed

to bring forth children to God." "If any of those who were awakened by my ministry did after that fall back, as sometimes too many did, I can truly say their loss hath been more to me than if one of my own children, begotten of my body, had been going to its grave. . . . I have counted as if I had goodly buildings and lordships in those places where my children were born; my heart hath been so wrapped up in the glory of this excellent work that I counted myself more blessed and honoured of God by this than if He had made me the emperor of the Christian world or the lord of all the glory of the earth."

Withal it is a *sair fecht* with him to the last. He has his "fits"—his black moods when he is tempted to "serve the Lord no longer," and there are times when the whole Bible seems "as dry as a stick" and when he is "scarce sensible of sin or grace." But the altar-lamp of devotion and love is never quenched. He has no morbid desire to have done with this present life; the world is a gallant place to live in; but to be with Christ he would be willing to go from the body, "that great piece of myself," and to venture the tugs and pains and harsh handling of Death. "Sometimes" he tells us—it is during the years of the Terror when Kirke and Jeffreys were breathing out threatenings and slaughter—"I look upon myself and say, 'Where am I now?' and do quickly return answer, 'Why, I am in an evil world, a great way from heaven, in a sinful body, among devils"—verily!—"and wicked men: sometimes be-

nighted, sometimes beguiled, sometimes fearing, sometimes hoping. . . . But then I turn the tables and say, 'But where shall I be shortly? Where shall I see myself anon, after a few more times have passed over me?' And when I can but answer this question thus—'I shall see myself with Jesus Christ,' this yields glory, even glory to my spirit now" (*The Desire of the Righteous Granted*).

But a very few more times were to pass over him before "the incorruptible promises of Eternity" were, for him, to be fulfilled.

These few "more times" which were to pass over Bunyan were at least stirring and momentous enough. For the scenes which make up the historical background for the last days of Bunyan's career were the events which staged the Revolution.

(1)

Thus John Eston, Esq., of Bedford (son of the John Eston who was one of the founders of the Bedford Meeting), being busy at this time in the King's interest, writes to Lord Ailesbury, November 22, 1687.—"My Lord, Since your Honour spake with me at Bedford I have conferred with the heads of the Dissenters and particularly with Mr. Margetts and Mr. Bunyan, whom your Lordship named to me. The first of these was Judge-Advocate in the Army under Lord General Monke when the late King was restored; the other a Pastor of the Dissenting congregation in this Town."

Mr. Eston, it seems, had conferred with them in the matter of the new Declaration of Indulg-

ence of that year and similar conferences in His Majesty's interest had been held with other Bedford worthies. Lawyer Foster, for instance (zealous enough, heretofore, for religious tests and penal enforcements), is approached and "submits all to His Majesty's pleasure." Sir George Blundell of Cardington (on the bench with Snagg, Chester and Beecher at Bunyan's first trial) is less amenable. He "submissively answers that occurences are so variable in future contingencies by the order of Divine providence that he cannot pretend to a capacity of determining beforehand what his thoughts and actions will be in progress of time in affairs of the nation." (a wise Blundell). We observe also in this whirligig of political events that Paul Cobb, displaced as Alderman, gives way, with others, to His Majesty's trusty and well-beloved William Hawkes, William Nicholls and Thomas Woodward, all of them leading members of Pastor Bunyan's church. We note also that Brother John Bardolf, whom we last saw refusing to pay his fine to Collector Battison, becomes a Councilman.

John Eston continues his letter: "I find them all"—Mr. Margetts, Mr. Bunyan and the other Dissenting chieftains—"to be unanimous for repealing all the Tests and Penal Laws touching Religion, and they hope to steere all their friends and followers accordingly." So that he is persuaded that, if only the Lord-Lieutenant will cordially assist with his influence over the Church

party, there cannot in human reason be any doubt as to the election of two members for Bedford who will dutifully further His Majesty's designs.[1]

How much of this letter we may take for gospel in Bunyan's case it is difficult to say. That he would favour the repeal of the persecuting laws is certain, but that he ever undertook to steer his followers into supporting the policy behind the new Declaration requires more proof than the suggestion of Eston's letter supplies. In point of fact we have direct testimony of another sort. The contemporary author of the biographical supplement to *Grace Abounding* notes that at this time "there were regulators sent into all cities and towns corporate to new-model the government in the magistracy, etc., by turning out some and putting in others," and that "against this Mr. Bunyan expressed his zeal with some weariness, as foreseeing the bad consequence that would attend it, and laboured with his congregation to prevent their being imposed upon in this kind; and when a great man in those days [Lord Ailesbury ?], coming to Bedford upon some such errand, sent for him, as it is supposed, to give him a place of public trust, he would by no means come at him, but sent his excuse." (See Offor, Vol. I, p. 63.)

Bunyan "laboured with his congregation to prevent their being imposed upon," and the fact is that Protestant Nonconformity, as we know, was shrewd enough to see the hook behind the

[1] Rawlinson MSS. quoted in Dr Brown's *Bunyan*, chap. xv.

bait of the new Indulgence. Calamy has left us the picture of a meeting of Dissenting leaders in Howe's London home, called to consider the Declaration. In the midst of the conference two messengers arrive from the Palace with word that the King is waiting in his closet and will not stir from thence till he has received an account of the proceedings. The messengers, says Calamy, are thereupon instructed that His Majesty's humble subjects would sooner relinquish their liberties once more than join in approving a course which would lead to a Romanist ascendancy.[1] Bunyan, indeed, could not have been blind to the portents which accompanied the new policy. For while the Huguenots were being dragonnaded out of France the Papal Nuncio was consecrated in St. James's, and Franciscans, Carmelites, Benedictines, and Jesuits were establishing their Orders under shelter of the Palace. Thus, if the Protestantism of those days knew little of the principle of Toleration, it knew something, at least, of self-preservation, and it knew that under a Roman Catholic ascendancy there could be little hope of any Protestant survival. But beyond this there was in Dissent a genuine reaching out after a true Catholicism. Bunyan himself, in his naïve way, was feeling after it. Baxter was explicit. He was for "Catholicism against all sects; to show the sin and folly and mischief of all sects that would appropriate the Church to themselves, and trouble the world with the question, Which of all

[1] Quoted in Rogers' *Life of Howe*.

these parties is the Church ? as if they knew not that the Catholic Church is *that whole* which containeth all the parts, though some more pure and some less." He cannot think it other than lamentable that most men "think not that they are bound to love those, as the members of Christ, which are against their party," but "if they can but get to be of a sect which they think the *holiest* (as the Anabaptists and Separatists), or which is the *largest* (as the Greeks and Papists), they think that they are sufficiently warranted to deny others to be God's Church, or at least to deny them Christian love and communion . . ." [1]

In any case, James, by his new policy, succeeded in doing what successive ecclesiastical councils and conferences had failed to do—he united the forces of English Protestantism, Anglican and Nonconformist. The spirit of dissent, says Macaulay, seemed to be extinct. That is to say, it was extinct in the sense that Conformity itself had for the moment become nonconformist. Thus we behold Bunyan's opponent of sixteen years ago,—Edward Fowler, the "moderate Doctour" of Northill and Cripplegate—figuring in a certain lively conference of London clergy, called to consider the Order in Council for the reading of the Declaration from the parish pulpits. Tillotson was present (come straight from his sick-bed to appeal for a general refusal to conform); but in spite of him, in spite, too, of Stillingfleet and Patrick, the drift was toward compliance. It was

[1] See *Autobiography of Baxter*, J. M. Lloyd Thomas, pp. 95, 99.

Fowler who made history. "I must be plain," says he. "The question is so simple that argument can throw no light on it, and can only beget heat. Let every man say Yes or No. But I cannot consent to be bound by the vote of the majority. I shall be sorry to cause a breach of unity: but this Declaration I cannot in conscience read." That is, Dr. Fowler may have been un-Lutheran enough in his theology, but he was sufficiently Luther-like that day in his resolution to take his stand, God helping him, as an Englishman and a Protestant. Livings, preferments, benefices might go, if go they must, but this Declaration should not be read at St. Giles'! And Fowler's utterance carried the day.—Somewhere in London, too,—if we may note as much in passing—another clergyman comes into momentary prominence at this time, conveying his convictions to his flock by means of a certain Old Testament text: "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." The young clergyman, it seems, was the Rev. Samuel Wesley, chiefly remembered by us as the father of two sons.

So the conferences continue, at Lambeth and elsewhere throughout the country, with growing heat and resolution, until sometime in the June of that fateful summer of 1688 we have the arrest of the Seven Bishops and those strange scenes which Bunyan himself, a frequent visitor to London, may have witnessed. And indeed, whether he witnessed them or no, his own life

and testimony had contributed to their making. For Bunyan, hardly less than any other living man, had helped to keep the soul of England alive, and it was the living soul of England which, in the final crisis, made 1688 a year which still salutes us with the sound of bugles and the unfurling of banners. For it is to be understood that the significance of 1688 has primarily to do, not with the foreign prince who came into the country, but with the alien thing that went out of it. William brought nothing new into England but himself, but when James fled out of England he took away with him the menace of an alien tyranny. And James fled, not because his son-in-law had landed with brass cannon and "whiskered infantry," but because everywhere in England impalpable forces and invisible armies were risen up against him. For when the barge conveying the Bishops to the Tower was acclaimed by thousands who flung themselves on their knees on the river-banks, when men waded waist-deep into the river itself to bless the Seven and receive their blessing, when from Whitehall to London Bridge the King's prisoners passed in strange triumph "between lines of boats" from which arose shouts of acclaim and benediction that "troubled tower and spire," it was the nation itself that was vocal; and invisible, inaudible, through the clamour of that day marched the ultimate armed antagonisms and prejudices of the English race.

For it may be said that England is defended by

her prejudices, and the English prejudices which are most militant and invincible are those which march behind the standard of liberty. To some minds it must, indeed, be perplexing that the average seventeenth-century Englishman, with all his petty bigotries and tyrannies, should have cherished so undissuadable an objection to any return to the Papal obedience; perplexing, too, that the objection should persist. It may be difficult to understand why, for instance, in the eyes of most Englishmen to-day John Bunyan or Dr. Johnson should seem more characteristically and fundamentally English than Newman, with all his distinction and charm, is ever likely to appear. It may be more difficult when, in spite of the sweet graces of the Cardinal and the rough and burly dogmatisms of the tinker and the Doctor, the popular preference is somehow traced to a vague instinct for liberty. Yet Bunyan and Johnson with all their dogmatism could at least make them new minds, and within their common faith there was always the human possibility that a new fact might alter an old formula. But the belief has grown up amongst us that under the Papal obedience men are not apt to make them new minds; that with such, the intolerance which is universal to flesh and blood has hardened into something metallic, and has been fashioned into something ingenious and mechanical; and the trouble with a machine is that it is not sensitive to those considerations and compunctions which are usually to be reckoned upon in human affairs.

Thus it was that, in that dark hour, the sevenfold witness of Sancroft and his suffragans burned like candles upon the altar of the national Church, lighting it up from within and signalling the hour of vigil and sacrifice. For whatever may have been the ecclesiastical and private motives behind the Bishops' opposition, the nation saw in it the avowal that the Reformation was something worth maintaining in England—that somehow in the charge of the Reformed faith there was a way of liberty, still perhaps a thorny track and largely unexplored, but a way which it behoved them to keep open for the feet of succeeding generations. And in all this the witness of the tinker-bishop of Dissent, hardly less than the witness of the Seven, was involved in the making and maintaining of the supreme decision.

Five months later William had landed at Torbay and December saw James in flight across the Channel and Jeffreys a captured fugitive in the Tower. The long Tribulation was over. But already, in the August of that year, a new grave had been dug in Bunhill Fields.

(2)

The Last Days of Bunyan's life may be pronounced happy. They were touched even with that kind of prosperity which, a generation or two ago, invited the moral reflections of improving writers for the young. For Bunyan had the Puritan virtues of frugality and thrift: and whilst he practised the liberality which he

preached and died a comparatively poor man, yet the tinker who in 1650 began housekeeping without dish or spoon could in 1685, under apprehension of arrest, make over to his "wellbeloved wife" "all and singuler my goods, chattels, debts, ready mony, plate, rings, household stuffe, aparrel, vtensils, brass, peuter, beding, and all other my substance whatsoever, moueable and immoueable." It appears, too, that he owned the modest dwelling in St. Cuthbert's parish in which he lived.

His home-life was happy. He was rich in domestic affection and was "very exact in family religion and the instruction of his children." Blind child Mary died in early womanhood, sometime before 1688; the remaining five—Elizabeth, John, Thomas, Sarah and Joseph—survived him. Elder son John carried on the family trade of braziering, joining the Bedford Meeting after his father's death, and becoming an honoured and active member. Son Joseph seems to have settled in Nottingham and become a member of the Church of England. Daughter Elizabeth married in 1677 Gilbert Ashley, a miller of Castle Mill, a man of some position and "an earnest member of the [local] church under Bunyan's care." Sarah married and settled in Bedford two years before her father's death. Heroic and well-beloved wife Elizabeth died in 1691, "following her faithful pilgrim." As early as 1672, as it seems, Bunyan's own brother, Thomas, joined the Bedford Meeting, and later took to preaching.

As for his Bedford charge, if we glance back over the entries in the Church Records during those last years, we shall find that with all his writing and itinerating he kept a firm hold upon his pastoral duties. He was "peculiarly attentive" it is said "to the sick or the afflicted"; [1] attentive, also, as we may judge, to the delinquent. Thus, Brother Oliver Thodye is brought to book for breakeing the Saboth and brawling with neighbours; Sister Mary ffosket (after private admonition given her before) is publikly admonished for receiveing and privatly whispering of an horrid scandal (without culler of truth) against Brother Honylove; also Brother Stanton for abuseing his wife and beateing hir often for very light maters. (Amendment promised.) Pastor Bunyan must also note the receipt of "a frothy letter" from one John Wildman wherein he counts "our dealing with him for his correction and amendment scuffling and fooling, and so desires a corispondence"—and gets it. "Ffriend Wildman,—Your letter has bin plainly read before us, and since you have bin withdrawn ffrom by the church ffor lying, railing and scandalizing of the church in generall and some of the brethren in perticuler: It is expected 1. That there be the signes of true repentance found in you for the same. 2. And also that you bring from the hands of those in the countrey before whom you have abused us som signe of their satisfaction concerning your repentance before we can admitt

[1] See Thomas Scott's *Life of Bunyan*.

you againe into our communion. . . . Wittnes, John Bunyan," etc. (See Brown, chap. xiii.) From all of which we judge that the minister of Bedford Meeting was something of a terror to evil-doers. We know, also, that, in spite of such rubs and anxieties, he remained established in the confidence of his people and held his charge with increasing honour and influence to the end.

As for wider relationships, if he continued to be opposed by the straiter sectaries, and if he was cold-shouldered by most of the chieftains of Dissent, he lived to see his reputation and influence extend far beyond the borders of his own country. He saw his *Pilgrim's Progress* pass into ten or eleven editions in England, received with high favour on the Continent, brought out *de luxe* in New England, and accorded the final compliment of imitation and counterfeit. This immense popularity he celebrated with unaffected delight, for he was humble enough to be glad of his successes without concealment or apology:

"In France and Flanders, where men kill each other
My Pilgrim is esteemed a friend, a brother.
In Holland, too, 'tis said, as I am told,
My Pilgrim is with some worth more than gold.
Highlanders and wild Irish can agree
My Pilgrim should familiar with them be.
'Tis in New England under such advance,
Receives there so much loving countenance,
As to be trimm'd, new cloth'd, and deck'd with gems
. . . . . .
"So comely doth my Pilgrim walk
That of him thousands daily sing and talk."

Some foundation there must have been, too, for the curious legend that in the last year of his life he held a chaplaincy under Sir John Shorter, then Lord Mayor of London. There, as we know, his popularity as a preacher knew no bounds, the Bunyan-furore, as Dr. Powicke has well put it, going on year after year to the last. "When Mr. Bunyan preached in London," says Doe, "if there were but one day's notice given, there would be more people come together to hear him preach than the meeting-house would hold. I have seen to hear him preach, by my computation, about twelve hundred at a morning lecture, by seven o'clock, on a working day, in the dark winter time. I also computed about three thousand that came to hear him one Lord's day, at London, at a town's end meeting-house; so that half were fain to go back again for want of room, and then himself was fain, at a back door, to be pulled almost over people to get upstairs to his pulpit." As for the chaplaincy, Offor is explicit: "He had the honour of being the chaplain to the lord-mayor of London." But Offor can provide no other proof than the curious memorandum (September 6, 1688) preserved in Ellis's Correspondence: "Few days before died Bunion, his lordship's teacher or chaplain, a man said to be gifted in that way, though once a cobler." We may take it as meaning no more than that Shorter "sat under" Bunyan during his preaching-visits to the city, and paid him special favour.

We have better evidence for his appointment to a Merchants' Lectureship at Pinner's Hall, Old Broad Street. A group of City merchants, sometime about 1672, "set up a Tuesday's Lecture in London, to be kept by six Ministers at Pinner's Hall, allowing them 20*s.* a piece each Sermon" (*Reliq. Bax.* III, 103). Baxter was one of the original six, with Bates, Collins, Jenkyn, Manton and John Owen. Baxter, however, fell foul of Puritan orthodoxy. "When I had Preached there but four Sermons I found the Independents so quarrelsome with what I said, that all the City did ring of their backbitings. . . . It was cryed abroad among all the Party, that I Preached up *Arminianism* and Free Will and *Man's Power*, and O! what an odious Crime was this." Dr. Powicke is apparently satisfied that it was Baxter's withdrawal which made room for Bunyan.[1] That he preached in Pinner's Hall we know, and to that hall we may turn for one more sight of him in the pulpit.

(3)

We have to imagine a spacious building with galleries, tier above tier, crowded with a mixed multitude, men and women, merchants and artisans, clerks and preachers, Baptists, Independents and Presbyterians, drawn together by the fame of the Bedford tinker. We behold Bunyan in the pulpit, born master of assemblies, commanding as ever; his hair more silvered,

[1] *Richard Baxter Under the Cross*, p. 59.

but his eye undimmed, his voice still powerful. As to his now matured style and manner, we may take it that they came within Puritan Cartwright's rule that the preacher's speech should be "pure, proper, simple" and his gestures "grave, modest and seemly, not utterly none nor too much neither." We know something of the vivid simplicity of Bunyan's speech, and as for his gestures, the emotional quality of even his later sermons suggests a large freedom. If the old saying is true that the speaker in his manner of delivery is apt to enact his trade or calling, then we may behold Bunyan handling his exordium as if he were fettling invisible pots and pans, but in application and appeal we can see him not otherwise than as pleader and prophet.

His text is St. Mark viii. 37: "*What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*" We have the sermon (Offor, Vol. I, 105) enlarged into a lengthy treatise and rendered ponderous in the process, marred also by sulphurous passages in the earlier hot gospeller style, and trailing off at the end into a prolix Conclusion, added, evidently, long after the gust of composition had spent itself. Still, we can gather from it something of the movement and colour of that day's discourse, something of its flashes and sallies and breakings away from conventional thought.

The preacher begins by opening the context and picturing Christ making His appeal for discipleship. The Master's face is always set against the wind and the proud and lofty waves

continually rage against His ship. He therefore who would follow Him must count the cost, and he that is afraid to venture a drowning, let him not set foot in Christ's vessel. This is a characteristic beginning, and Bunyan proceeds to show that a prize counted worthy of such hazards must necessarily be great. Thus he comes at his theme—The Greatness of the Soul. He enumerates its powers—the understanding, the conscience, the affections; imagination, memory, the will—"the golden things of the Soul"—and pauses to show that every sense and passion is capable of being degraded. Love, which "pitcheth upon God in Christ, and extendeth to all that is good," may be set upon base objects; Hatred, whose true object is Sin, may degenerate into malignity; Fear, which springs rightly from a sense of "the greatness and goodness and majesty of God," may become cowardice and slavish superstition.

He goes on to argue the greatness of the Soul from the excellency of the body, "that curiously wrought cabinet" which contains it, and from the achievements of man in the arts and sciences. "All those famous arts and works and inventions of works that are done by men under heaven, they are all the inventions of the Soul" and that even though it is disregarded and "dragged up and down by every lust." But also, the Soul which is thus curious about arts and sciences has faculties that can reach higher, faculties that "have to do with invisibles, yea, with the Supreme Being."

In this sense the Soul is "the top-piece of the workmanship of God in the world." "I think I may say, without offence to God or man, that one reason why God made the world was, that He might manifest Himself not only by, but to, the works which He made"; and to this end the Soul is singled out by Him "for His walking-mate and companion."

The greatness of the Soul, too, lies in its immortality. "I will speak without fear: if it may be said God *cannot* do what He *will* not do, then [even] He cannot annihilate the Soul." Its greatness is evident in the price of its redemption; and as it is capable of receiving grace in this world, so it is capable of glory in the spiritual world, even of "enjoying God in glory and of prying into the mysteries that are in Him."

But herein, too, lies the gall of perdition; and even in its ruin the greatness of the Soul is manifest. The pains of perdition must stand largely "in those deep thoughts and apprehensions" which souls in the spiritual world will have of the nature of sin, of God, and of separation from Him. For the lost soul will have thoughts that will "clash with glory, clash with justice, clash with law, clash with itself." Bunyan pauses here to thrust in a word against an arbitrary indiscriminate doctrine of punishment. In the nature of things there must be degrees of perdition and some hells "more tolerable" than others. "Why should a poor, silly, ignorant man, though damned, be punished with the same

degree of torment that he that has lived a thousand times worse shall be punished with? It cannot be; justice will not admit it; guilt and the quality of the transgression will not admit it"—the *quality of the transgression*; for, after all, hell-fire itself "can kindle upon nothing but sin." The counterpart also is true: the glory of heaven can kindle upon nothing but holiness. "Take holiness away out of heaven, and what is heaven?"

So he presently passes to an acute analysis of Temptation as the occasion of the Soul's undoing. The motion of sin, he says, begins with an appeal to the imagination. And the imagination, if it were "on God's side," would so conceive of sin as to present it as something ugly and unreasonable, so that the Soul should at once "let down the sluice and pull up the drawbridge" against it. But an evil imagination helps the motion of sin toward the deed "by dressing it up in that guise and habit that may best delude the understanding, judgment and conscience . . . and thus being trimmed up like a Bartholomew baby, it is presented to all the rest of the powers of the soul where with joint consent it is admired and embraced. . . . For the imagination is such a forcible power that if it putteth forth itself to dress up and present a thing to the soul, whether that thing be evil or good, the rest of the faculties cannot withstand it." Modern psychology has very little to add to this.

So through many a passage that reverberates

with something of the thunderous dehortation of his early gospelling days, he comes to his evangelical appeal. Since the Soul is so great and its loss is so unspeakable, then those who neglect it are the greatest of fools. Let a man beware of a mean conceit of himself. Let him not say to himself, "Fond fool, canst thou imagine that such a gnat, a flea, as thou art can take and possess the heavens and mantle thyself up in the eternal glories?" Let him know that the greatness of the undertaking corresponds to the nobleness of the soul itself, which cannot be content with the low and dry things of the world. And let him not be discouraged, either, by a sense of sinfulness, and poverty of grace; "Christ seems to be more tender to the weak." Let all these things but serve to put him the more earnestly upon his Gospel-duties—faith, hope, repentance, humility, diligence.

This is one of the discourses which John Owen is said to have heard,—not by any means the last that Bunyan preached, but fairly representative of his maturer style. And Owen's judgment we know: he would gladly have given up all his learning "for that tinker's power of preaching." Some record of the Last Sermon itself is also left to us (Offor, Vol. II), as also of his reputed Dying Sayings. Spurious or genuine, these add nothing to our store, and we have Living Sayings enough to go upon.

(4)

All that we need turn to now is the simple record of the last journey. He was not yet sixty years old, but our *Grace Abounding* chronicler speaks of him as "worn out." Worn out he may well have been, for the early struggles, the long years of confinement and the later labours and harassments must have told their tale. No doubt, too, he wrote over-much, and the strain and excitement of the last national crisis must have broken him in the end. It falls out that in this eventful year of 1688 he must go up to London for August preaching and does so on horseback. He turns westward to call at Reading, which last undertaking, says our chronicler, was appropriately a labour of love. "For a young gentleman, a neighbour of Mr. Bunyan, happening into the displeasure of his father, and being much troubled in mind upon that account," he must pitch upon Mr. Bunyan as a fit peacemaker. A wise choice, as it turned out, for "so riding to Reading, he then there used such pressing arguments and reasons against anger and passion, as also for love and reconciliation" that the father was mollified and won over on the spot.

Thus, in happy mood, he rides forward to London town—a London mightily agitated and already feeling the stirrings of that "Protestant wind," blowing favourably across from Holland. On Bunyan, however, just now, another wind sweeps over the London Road, and with it

"excessive rains"; so that when at length he arrives at the door of "his very loving friend's, Mr. Strudwick's, a grocer, at Holborn Bridge," he is "extreme wet" and weary. This would be about the second week in August. "Worn out" as he is, and with symptoms of a "sweating distemper" beginning to trouble him, his mind is upon preparing the manuscript of his *Acceptable Sacrifice* for the printers, and on Sunday the 19th he preaches in Mr. Gamman's meeting-house, somewhere near Whitechapel; then returns to loving friend Strudwick's, and grows rapidly worse. He bears his sufferings with fortitude, and, "finding his vital strength decay," awaits the end "with a constant and Christian patience." Sometime on Thursday, the 30th, and not more than three minutes' walk from Strudwick's house, Lord Mayor Shorter (perhaps on his way to visit friend Bunyan on his death-bed) falls from his horse and is mortally injured. Six days later the church at Bedford Meeting is "kept in prayre and humilyation for this Heavy Stroak upon us, y^e^ Death of deare Brother Bunyan." The end had come on Friday, the 31st.[1] We may suppose it was on the Monday following that his body was laid to rest in friend Strudwick's vault in Bunhill Fields.

Of that final scene we know nothing. We

[1] The date given in the *Grace Aboundiug* supplement is August 12th. Charles Doe gives it as August 31st, which agrees with the record that Bunyan's last sermon was preached on the 19th, and that the memorial service was held in Bedford as late as September 4th. See Brown, chap. xvi, 390–394.

prefer to picture him as we saw him on that last journey to Town. On horseback he goes, jogging over the muddy road, his cloak held close around him against the pelting storm, his broad-brimmed hat drawn down. Then (as we like to think) he dismounts for the last stretch of the journey, stabling his horse by the way. So we see him striding forward, as his Pilgrims did, on foot—a brave, honest figure, bending to the storm, and now growing dim to us in the blur of the rain. And then yonder, suddenly, above the mist, the sheen of towers where a light shines fairer than the sun; and in the distance, above the rumble and clatter of the traffic and the incessant noises of the town—in the far distance, the sound of trumpets and the pealing of bells.

The time is yet to come, says "Mark Rutherford" in his concluding reflections upon Bunyan, when we shall live by a faith which is a harmony of all our faculties. Probably he would not have denied that Bunyan did so. Bunyan in all his powers and faculties was *unanimous*. He had his sceptical moods and questionings; it was impossible that with a mind so active and sensitive he should have escaped them; but the faith which he embraced was for him authoritative and satisfying for heart and intellect. So far as he and his people were concerned, the Mosaic cosmogony needed no defence, miracles constituted no problem, and the text of his English Bible was the medium of infallibility.

In all this it would be easy to colour the contrast between Bunyan and ourselves. After ten generations we are aware of a difference—more sharply so now than fifty years ago. Spurgeon, for instance, would have confessed to no difference; his faith was housed in the ancestral Puritan creed. But even Spurgeon lived in it without Bunyan's security of movement. The walls were by this loopholed and the approaches barricaded for defence. For ourselves, it may be urged by the truculent or the depressed that as for Puritan orthodoxy, we have been dispossessed or have voluntarily moved out of it; that we return to view the old haunts of the faith, like the summer tourists in Bergen who wander through the quarters of the old Hanseatic League, admiring their austere simplicity and solidity (as against our garish lath-and-plaster), but going back to dine and sleep at a modern hotel.

And indeed nothing could be more foolish than to deny the charge, nothing less convincing than to attempt to mask it by a studied imitation of the old style. But once we have honestly noted as much, what comes home to us is that, after all, the differences are exterior and incidental. And this is not to suggest the irritating sophism which spins gossamer platitudes about the distinction between dogma and experience. It is not to suggest that whilst Bunyan's beliefs have gone his experience remains—as if experience could ever be independent of belief. It is to say that Bunyan's central faith remains. To change

our parable, it is to suggest that Elstow and Bedford remain, that the Ouse and the Great North Road remain, as also the sun, moon and stars, though Bunyan's cottage and the Mill Lane Barn are no more. To believe that the universe is organized for ultimate and eternal holiness, and and that to this end Holy Love works through all things as redeeming grace—this has never been a matter of formal demonstration but always a venture of the soul. Faith is neither easier nor more difficult than in Bunyan's day; it is still what he found it to be—a call to valour. And for the rest, neither criticism, science nor the new psychology has dissolved for us the facts of sin, of sorrow and of mortality; and the needs of the human heart remain unchanged. Conscience, Duty, the eternal authority of right over wrong have outlasted the Puritan times, and man continues a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth.

As for Christian applications and the message of social righteousness, Bunyan is largely our contemporary, and in his dream of a united fellowship of faith he speaks to us in the language not of yesterday but of to-morrow. It may be contended, of course, that he was wrong. It may be contended that the multiplication of evangelical sects has followed the normal development of the Reformation, and that by such means a certain vigorous individualism has been achieved and a specializing spiritual culture. And admittedly there have been instances where separation has

been dictated by a moral imperative. But perhaps it may still be claimed without extravagance that on the whole, and among those who are essentially agreed, association and co-operation are a better means of culture than separation and dissension. This was Bunyan's belief, who had not only a great conscience but also a certain courtesy of conscience. It belonged to his discernment that he could distinguish, as we have seen, between truth and that pride of opinion which is its parasite. Had his message been heeded, English Evangelicalism would have been less sectarian. Were he with us to-day when evangelical communions are divided less by questions of faith than by considerations of finance and administration, his witness would be outspoken and vigorous.

On the larger issue he may still be beyond us. He looked for a world-faith which should bring in a world-order. We are still disposed to think that the new order is the thing and faith one of the negligible *et cetera*. We propose a League of Nations, a League of Faith being neither here nor there. We think if we can come to see eye to eye in the matter of treaties, frontiers, and trade-agreements we shall presently come, at our leisure, to see eye to eye in the smaller matter of those sanctions of the spirit which make treaties sacramental, frontiers holy and inviolable, and trade a spiritual enterprise. This is our dream of Progress. Bunyan dreamed otherwise. He associated progress with a steadfast

pilgrimage of faith, and that pilgrimage with a goal great enough to engage the heart of man and justify the toils and hazards of the long and tremendous journey.

APPENDICES

A. Elstow and the Bunyan Ancestry

Elstow (Helenstow, after St. Helen, mother of Constantine) was the site of the ancient Benedictine Abbey founded about 1078. The early Bunyans, it appears, held land under the Abbey. S. R. Wigram in his *Chronicles of the Abbey of Elstow* (1885) makes two interesting allusions to the Bunyan ancestry. He finds in the Curiæ Regis Rolls of 1199 record of a suit against the Abbess by William Buniun of Elstow. Buniun pleads against the Abbess that William of Willshamstead had sued him in respect of half a virgate of land in that place, as being his right and inheritance. "It may be" (says Wigram) "that Buniun was tenant of some of the Abbey lands and that . . . this was instituted as a friendly suit, in order that the rights of the Abbess might be confirmed by the decision of the court" (p. 56).

The second citation is from the Court Rolls of Elstow Manor, 33 Henry VIII (1541), wherein the name of Thomas Bonyon appears among the twelve jurors of the court. Further "'it is testified by the homagers that William Bonyon, who held of the lord King, as of his manor of Elnestow, one messuage, and one pightell, with appurtenances, in Elnestow, and nine acres of land lying singly and separately in the fields of Elnestow by fealty, suit of court, and at the yearly rent of three shillings and one halfpenny, has, since the date of the last court, ended his days; And that Thomas Bonyon is the son and next

heir of the said William Bonyon, and is of the age of forty years and more, whence there accrues to the lord King as a relief in soccage iij*s.* o½*d.* And the said Thomas Bonyon is admitted as tenant in fee of the aforesaid messuage, pightell and nine acres of land at the rent and services aforesaid . . .' " (pp. 160, 161).

Wigram adds: " in almost every one of the later rolls the wife of Thomas Bonyon is fined for infringement of the assize of either bread or beer." That fines for overcharging in brewing, etc., were something of a matter of course in Elstow we may judge from the Roll already cited, in which Thomas Bonyon and his fellow-jurors " present that Robert Thorpe, Robert Leed, and Nicholas Cowper are common bakers of bread and have infringed the assize," and that " the wife of William Corteys, the wife of Robert Thorpe, the wife of Thomas Sharpe, the wife of William Dale, and Robert Wyllyamson, are common brewers of beer, and have infringed the assize " (p. 160), fines being imposed in each case.

B. Bunyan and the Siege of Leicester

On the face of it the confirmation of Brown's contention that Bunyan was drafted to the Newport Pagnell garrison argues against his theory that he was among the forces sent from there to Leicester. It appears that Bunyan's name stands on the muster-rolls of the Newport garrison from November, 1644, to June, 1647. In March, 1645, he is listed in Major Boulton's Company and remains on the Company muster up to May 27. This evidence, such as it is, is against Bunyan's being in Leicester in the summer of '45. On the other hand both the author of the first sketch of Bunyan's life attached to *Grace Abounding* and the author of the later sketch (written twelve years after Bunyan's death) state that he was at the Leicester siege.

C. Gifford's Pastoral Letter

To the Church over which God made me an overseer when I was in the world.

I beseech you, brethren beloved, let these words (wrote in my love to you, and care over you, when our heavenly Father was removing me to the kingdom of His dear Son) be read in your church-gatherings together. I shall not now, dearly beloved, write unto you about that which is the first, and without which all other things are as nothing in the sight of God, viz., the keeping the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience; I shall not, I say, write of these things (though the greatest), having spent my labours among you, to root you and build you up in Christ through the grace you have received; and to press you to all manner of holiness in your conversation, that you may be found of the Lord, without spot, and blameless, at His coming. But the things I shall speak to you of, are about your CHURCH AFFAIRS, which I fear have been little considered by most of you; which things, if not minded aright, and submitted unto, according to the will of God, will by degrees bring you under divisions, distractions, and at last, to confusion of that gospel order and fellowship which now, through grace, you enjoy. Therefore, my brethren, in the first place, I would not have any of you ignorant of this, that every one of you are as much bound now to walk with the church in all love, and in the ordinances of Jesus Christ our Lord, as when I was present among you: neither have any of you liberty to join yourselves to any other society, because your pastor is removed from you: for you were not joined to the ministry, but to Christ, and the church; and this is and was the will of God in Christ, to all the churches of the saints. Read Acts ii. 42; and compare it with Acts i. 14, 15. And I charge you before the Lord,

as you will answer it at the coming of our Lord Jesus, that none of you be found guilty herein.

Secondly. Be constant in your church assemblies. Let all the work which concerns the church be done faithfully amongst you; as admission of members, exercising of gifts, election of officers, as need requires, and all other things as if named, which the Scriptures, being searched, will lead you into, through the Spirit; which things, if you do, the Lord will be with you, and you will convince others that Christ is your Head, and your dependency is not upon man; but if you do the work of the Lord negligently, if you mind your own things and not the things of Christ, if you grow of indifferent spirits, whether you mind the work of the Lord in His church or no, I fear the Lord by degrees will suffer the comfort of your communion to be dried up, and the candlestick which is yet standing to be broken in pieces; which God forbid.

Now, concerning your admission of members, I shall leave you to the Lord for counsel, Who hath hitherto been with you; only thus much I think expedient to stir up your remembrance in; that after you are satisfied in the work of grace in the party you are to join with, the said party do solemnly declare (before some of the church at least), That Union with Christ is the foundation of all saints communion, and not any ordinances of Christ, or any judgment or opinion about externals; and the said party ought to declare, whether a brother or sister, that through grace they will walk in love with the church, though there should happen any difference in judgment about other things. Concerning separation from the church about baptism, laying on of hands, anointing with oil, psalms, or any externals, I charge every one of you respectively, as you will give an account for it to our Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge both quick and dead at His

coming, that none of you be found guilty of this great evil; which, while some have committed, and that through a zeal for God, yet not according to knowledge, they have erred from the law of the love of Christ, and have made a rent from the true church, which is but one. I exhort you, brethren, in your comings together, let all things be done decently, and in order, according to the Scriptures. Let all things be done among you without strife and envy, without self-seeking and vain-glory. Be clothed with humility, and submit to one another in love. Let the gifts of the church be exercised according to order. Let no gift be concealed which is for edification; yet let those gifts be chiefly exercised which are most for the perfecting of the saints. Let your discourses be to build up one another in your most holy faith, and to provoke one another to love and good works: if this be not well-minded, much time may be spent and the church reap little or no advantage. Let there be strong meat for the strong, and milk for babes. In your assemblies avoid all disputes which gender to strifes, as questions about externals, and all doubtful disputations. If any come among you who will be contentious in these things, let it be declared that you have no such order, nor any of the churches of God. If any come among you with any doctrine contrary to the doctrine of Christ, you must not treat with such an one as with a brother, or enter into dispute of the things of faith with reasonings (for this is contrary to the Scriptures); but let such of the brethren who are the fullest of the Spirit, and the word of Christ, oppose such an one steadfastly face to face, and lay open his folly to the church, from the Scriptures. If a brother through weakness speak anything contrary to any known truth of God (though not intended by him), some other brother of the church must in love clear up the truth, lest many of the church be laid under temptation. Let

no respect of persons be in your comings-together; when you are met as a church there's neither rich nor poor, bond nor free in Christ Jesus. 'Tis not a good practice to be offering places or seats when those who are rich come in; especially it is a great evil to take notice of such in time of prayer, or the Word; then are bowings and civil observances, at such times, not of God. Private wrongs are not presently to be brought unto the church. If any of the brethren are troubled about externals, let some of the church (let it not be a church business) pray for and with such parties.

None ought to withdraw from the church if any brother should walk disorderly, but he that walketh disorderly must bear his own burden, according to the Scriptures. If any brother should walk disorderly, he cannot be shut out from any ordinance before church censure. Study among yourselves what is the nature of fellowship, as the Word, prayer, and breaking of bread; which, whilst few, I judge, seriously consider, there is much falling short of duty in the churches of Christ. You that are most eminent in profession, set a pattern to all the rest of the church. Let your faith, love, and zeal be very eminent; if any of you cast a dim light, you will do much hurt in the church. Let there be kept up among you solemn days of prayer and thanksgiving; and let some time be set apart, to seek God for your seeds, which thing hath hitherto been omitted. Let your deacons have a constant stock by them, to supply the necessity of those who are in want. Truly, brethren, there is utterly a fault among you that are rich, especially in this thing; 'tis not that little which comes from you on the first day of the week that will excuse you. I beseech you, be not found guilty of this sin any longer. He that sows sparingly will reap sparingly. Be not backward in your gathering; *let none of you willingly stay till part of the*

meeting be come, especially such who should be examples to the flock. One or two things are omitted about your comings-together, which I shall here add. I beseech you, forbear sitting in prayer, except parties be any way disabled; 'tis not a posture which suits with the majesty of such an ordinance. Would you serve your prince so? In prayer, let all self-affected expressions be avoided, and all vain repetitions. God hath not gifted, I judge, every brother to be a mouth to the church. Let such as have most of the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, shut up all your comings-together, that ye may go away with your hearts comforted and quickened.

Come together in time, and leave off orderly; for God is a God of order among His saints. Let none of you give offence to his brother in indifferent things, but be subject to one another in love. Be very careful what gifts you approve of by consent for public service.

Spend much time before the Lord, about choosing a pastor, for though I suppose he is before you,[1] whom the Lord hath appointed, yet it will be no disadvantage to you, I hope, if you walk a year or two as you are before election; and then, if you be all agreed, let him be set apart, according to the Scriptures. Salute the brethren who walk not in fellowship with you, with the same love and name of brother or sister as those who do.

Let the promises made to be accomplished in the latter day, be often urged before the Lord in your comings-together; and forget not your brethren in bonds. Love him much for the work's sake, who labours over you in the word and doctrine. Let no man despise his youth. Muzzle not the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn

[1] Alluding probably to Burton.

to you. Search the Scriptures; let some of them be read to you about this thing. If your teacher at any time be laid aside, you ought to meet together as a church, and build up one another. If the members at such a time will go to a public ministry, it must first be approved of by the church. Farewell; exhort, counsel, support, reprove one another in love.

Finally, brethren, be all of one mind, walk in love one to another, even as Christ Jesus hath loved you, and given Himself for you. Search the Scriptures for a supply of those things wherein I am wanting. Now the God of peace, who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, multiply His peace upon you, and preserve you to His everlasting kingdom by Jesus Christ. Stand fast: the Lord is at hand.

That this was written by me, I have set my name to it, in the presence of two of the brethren of the church.

D. Baxter and Bunyan

"Bunyan came up to London every year or oftener [after 1672]. He had many friends there. Dr. Owen was one of them, and received him as a guest. He preached for Owen in his Church at Moorfields, and for Rev. George Cockayn at Red Cross Street. . . . He even lectured at Pinner's Hall, where Owen regularly took his turn with Baxter. People of fashion and city merchants flocked to hear him from time to time; and he was befriended, or patronized, by Sir John Shorter. . . . Throughout the whole period Baxter was living within easy reach at Bloomsbury or Highgate or Charterhouse Square. Yet there is no hint of a meeting, or a word, between them. . . . What else than the *odium theologicum* can account for so sinister a silence?" (Fredk. J. Powicke: *The Reverend Richard Baxter Under the Cross*, pp. 57, 58.)

Dr. Powicke's surmise is supported by the fact that Baxter took Fowler's part in the controversy on *The Design of Christianity* (see p. 201).

"Dr. Edward Fowler (a very ingenious sober Conformist) wrote two books: One an Apology for the Latitudinarians, as they were then called; the other entitled *Holyness the Design of Christianity*; in which he sometimes put in the word *only* which gave offence, and the book seemed to some to have a scandalous design, to obscure the Glory of *free Justification*. . . . Which occasioned a few sheets of mine on the said Book and Question for reconciliation, and clearing up of the Point: Which when Mr. Fowler saw, he wrote to me to tell me he was of my Judgment . . . but he spake feelingly against those quarrelsome men that are readier to censure than understand. I returned him some advice to take heed, lest their weakness and censoriousness should make him too angry and impatient with Religious People. . . ." (*Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, III, 85.)

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